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DEAD/ A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Thursday, April 29, 2004 ★★ 50 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 141 P18
website: www.inq7.net

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ALYANSA/ A8

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By Christian Esguerra

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A NATION OF CLANS

Mindanao: Landed, royal clans dominate

By the PDI Mindanao Bureau
Project Editor: Leah P. Makabenta

(Last of seven parts)

E-2004 SPECIAL REPORT

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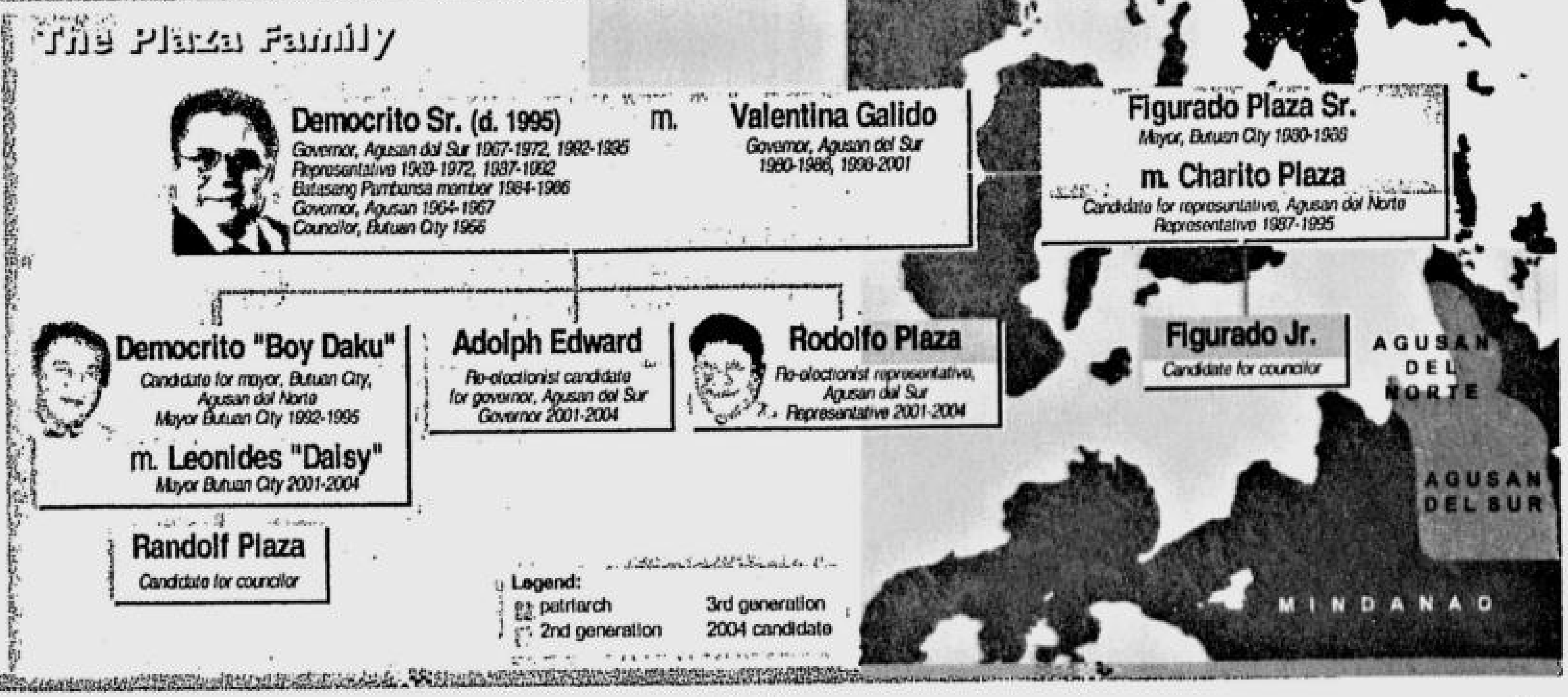
MINDANAO/ A10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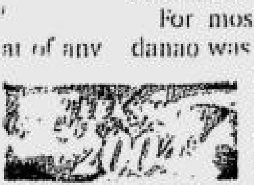

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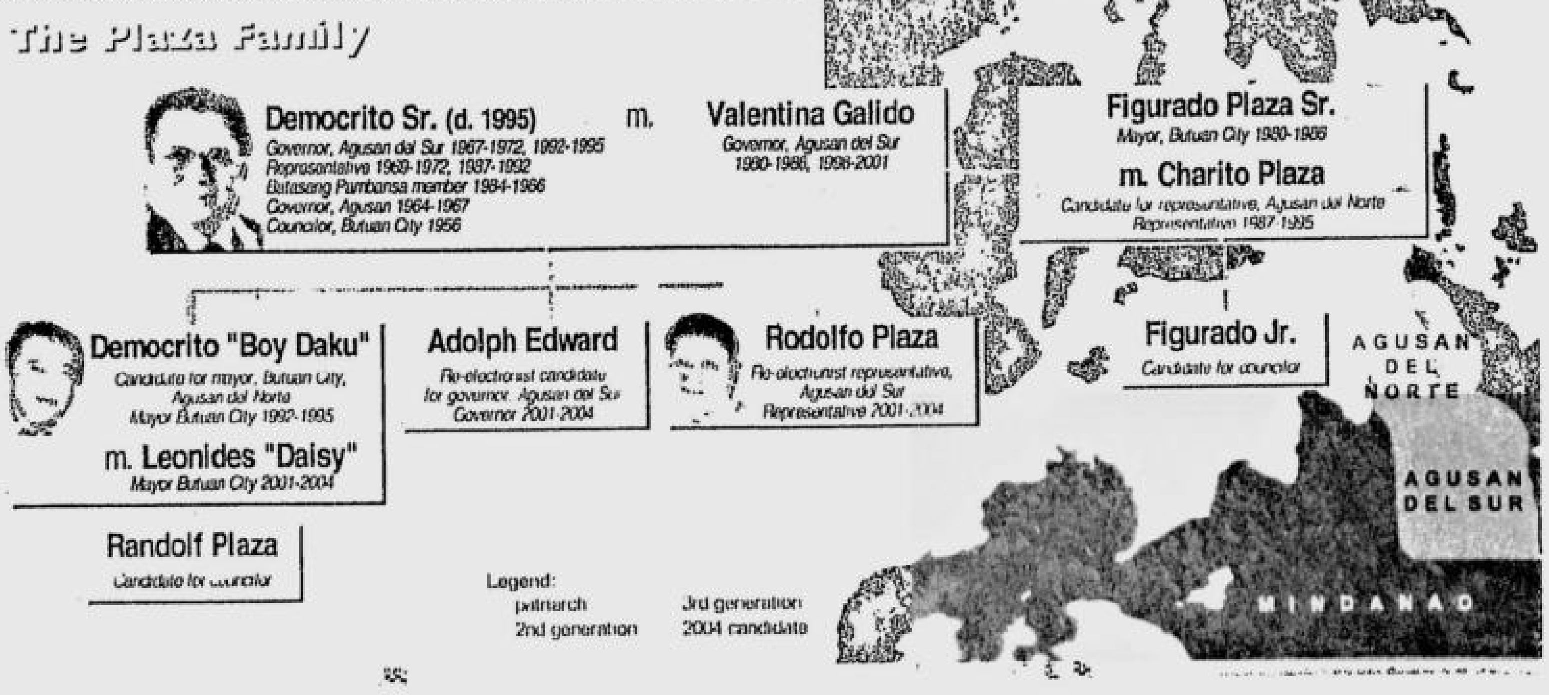
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Visayas including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE. PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/28/04

Narrow GMA victory seen

But NY investment firm fears win may be tainted

By Gil C. Cabacungan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is likely to win on May 10 but with a narrow margin, and the election's results may be tainted with allegations of cheating, according to the New York-based Bear, Stearns & Co. investment firm.

In its latest research report on the Philippines dated April 27, Bear Stearns said that just as important as getting a fresh mandate, the President has to get at least half of her K-4 senatorial slate win to prevent a "hung Senate" that could again block vital legislative reforms.

Bear Stearns analyst John Stuermer, who wrote the report, said the President was on track to win the elections but her "victory margin may not be a large one and may be short of a mandate."

He also said her victory "could be clouded by allegations of irregularities in vote counting as well as poorly or inaccurately prepared lists of eligible voters."

Stuermer, who was in Manila from April 20 to 23, based his projections on the surge in the President's voter preference ratings in the most recent Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia surveys where she increased her lead over main rival Fernando Poe Jr. by as much as 4.5 percentage points.

'Seriously flawed'

But he said the credibility of the elections could be put in question, citing a complaint of electoral fraud made by the National Movement for Free Elections, the private election watchdog organization, that the voters' lists in Metro Manila were "seriously flawed."

"Given that this organization is based at the Makati Business Club, a core support organization for President Arroyo, this is a serious charge," Stuermer said.

Stuermer traced the President's strong spurt in the latest surveys to Poe's "lackluster campaign" which has damaged his chances and pushed him "toward an irreversible downward trend."

He noted that Poe's ebbing popularity in the surveys has been applauded by the financial markets.

However, he said the presidency was by no means in the bag for the President, citing the "undecided" segment, or those respondents who said they had not made up their minds, which has risen more rapidly than support for any candidate, and the possible withdrawal of Sen. Panfilo Lacson from the race.

Stuermer noted that Poe's camp has claimed the support of the "undecided" which it described as mostly working-class voters who "fear ridicule by 'yuppie' pollsters and report their voter preference as undecided."

Still, Stuermer said the President has the edge because of her political machine that can convert a larger percentage of her support into actual votes.

Since a narrow victory clouded by charges of election-day irregularities could undermine the new claim to legitimacy that Ms Macapagal hopes to gain in this election, the President should ensure that she retains control of the Senate by helping her Senate ticket win most of the seats, Stuermer said.

"If she wins by a small margin in a highly contested election, she may continue to have problems controlling a Senate in which her alliance has only a small majority," he said.

"Having a secure working majority would be important in terms of uncorking the logjam of important economic policy legislation that has built up over the last year," he added.

If the President's running mate, Sen. Noli de Castro, wins, it will leave the Senate with only 23 seats filled. Since the President is allied with only 7 of the 12 senators who will remain until 2007, including De Castro, the K-4 must get between 6 and 7 of the 12 slots to assure her of a majority in the Senate.

Three Mindanao congressmen yesterday predicted an overwhelming victory for Ms Macapagal, claiming that recent surveys by independent pollsters showed the President taking the lead in Mindanao from actor Fernando Poe Jr. of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Victory 'imminent'

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay of Surigao del Sur (Lakas-CMD) said the President's victory had become imminent and that Poe's lack of effective political machinery and platform would spell his doom. He was joined in this assessment by Nereus Acosta of Bukidnon (Liberal Party) and Benasing Macarambon of Lanao del Sur (Nationalist People's Coalition).

The SWS's recent survey showed Ms Macapagal leading in Mindanao with 44 percent of the vote, against Poe's 37 percent.

Pichay said this was a big improvement over her 35 percent rating in the March 21-29 survey while Poe's new rating was lower than his previous 42 percent.

Pichay also said the President's peace efforts and her strong commitment to fully develop Mindanao, as shown by her move to transfer the agriculture department to the South to help realize the region's potential as the country's food basket, had largely contributed to her lead in Mindanao.

He also cited her resolve to end terrorism which has discouraged investments.

Acosta attribu ted the President's lead in Mindanao to her frequent visits there to determine the immediate needs of the people, which included health, jobs, education, new investments and stability.

Marambon said the President "is our one and only choice in the ARMM because she is the only candidate who fully understands the needs of our people, having lived in Mindanao herself."

Representatives Roseller Barinaga and Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado said the President's topping the absentee voting exit poll in Hong Kong indicated that her good governance was also being felt by Filipinos abroad.

The exit poll conducted by a non-government organization showed the President topping the survey with 117 votes. Poe placed third with 33 votes. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Dona Pazzibugan*

ABU HUNTER

President Macapagal congratulates Army Col. Noel Buan after conferring on him a commendation for neutralizing an eight-man group of Abu Sayyaf bandits lead by Hamsiraji Sali. The ceremony in Malacañang was attended by Buan's wife, Cielo. The Buans were in the news when New People's Army rebels captured the then Army major in 2001 and released him after 19 months.

PCPO-MALACANANG

Drilon defends polling firms; let them come clean, says Guingona

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday said survey firms like the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia would not risk their integrity and reputation by rigging the results of their voter preference surveys.

Drilon said the opposition charge that the survey outfits were manipulating data in favor of the administration K-4 coalition was baseless and senseless.

"The pollsters have indicated that they have the documents to show the validity of the surveys conducted, including proof of the respondents interviewed, as against the claims of the opposition," Drilon told Senate reporters.

He wondered why the opposition would cite survey results of the same survey outfits when their candidate, Fernando Poe Jr., was leading, but question them when Poe runs second to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Drilon said he was confident that the survey firms were intent on preserving their integrity.

"If they destroy their reputation here by allowing themselves to be instruments of the administration, then after this election nobody would believe them anymore," he said.

Manipulating their data would not do these firms any good as because they "live on the basis of their reputation," Drilon said.

"That's another reason why these statements coming from the opposition rank would have absolutely no basis," he said.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Jr. yesterday dared the polling outfits to prove there was no manipulation of data in their surveys by opening to public scrutiny how their surveys are being funded, conducted and analyzed.

"Unless the survey groups come clean to our people, their outfits and their so-called surveys totally lose credibility," Guingona said in a statement.

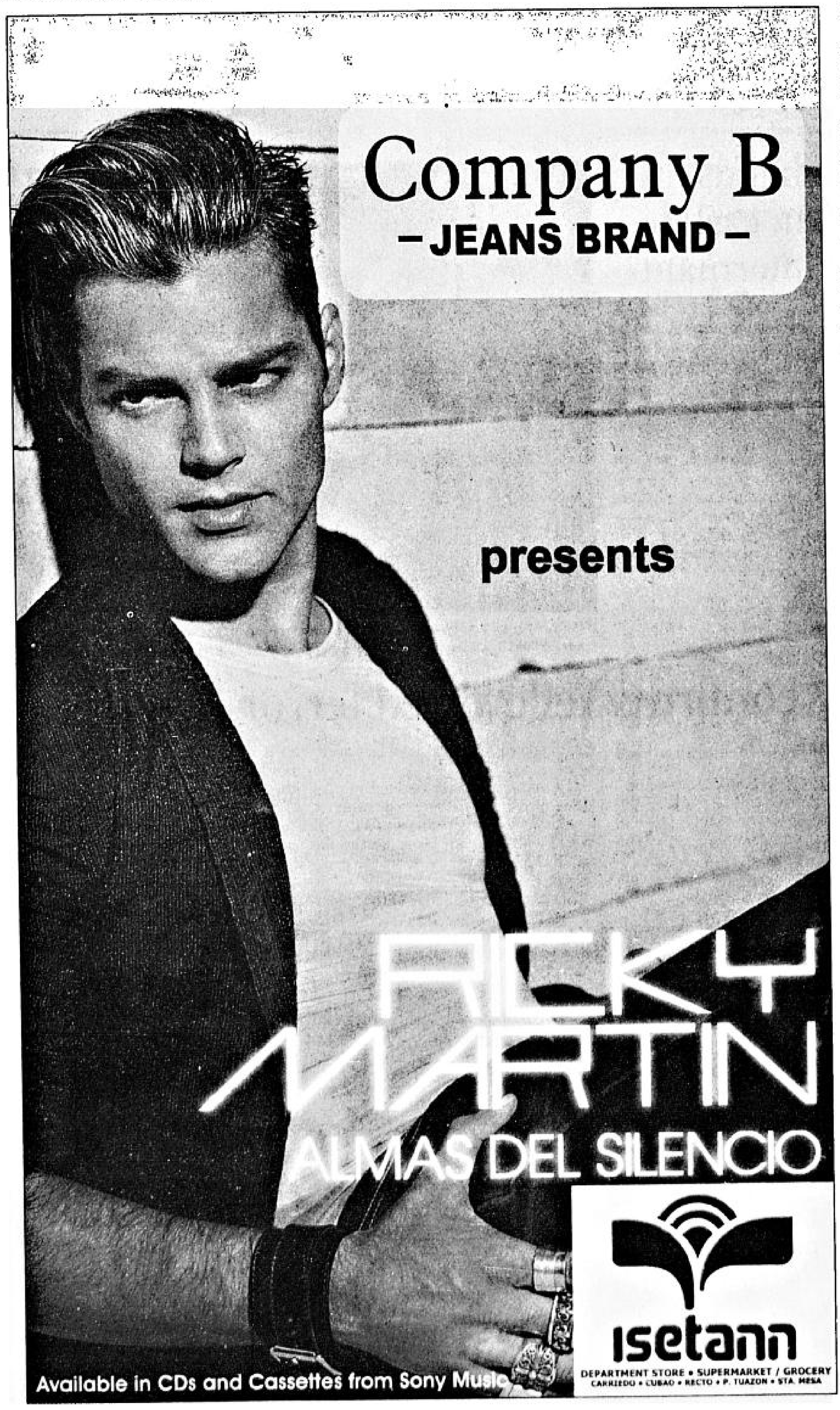
He warned that with barely two weeks before elections, there were already perceptions that the survey outfits have either been "infiltrated by partisan elements, or worse, have been bought out and become party to manipulating public perception."

He said he found it "particularly disturbing" that both Pulse Asia and the SWS have been outsourcing their data- gathering requirements, including the conduct of interviews with survey respondents, to a third party, the NFO Trends.

The NFO has now been surfacing to report its own analyses of voters' preferences in tandem with print and broadcast organizations, Guingona noted.

"This not only confuses the public but points to how data is possibly being peddled around to the higher bidder," he said.

The Vice President said he believes "mind conditioning" was "blatantly taking place, with the credibility of the survey companies in serious question and the very integrity of the electoral process put at risk." *Christine Avedaño and Jerome Aning*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ENTERTAINMENT 'WEARING THIN'

Curtains fall on Eddie Gil show

By Philip C. Tubeza and Martin P. Marfil

WHEN it rains, it pours.

And it was stormy weather—despite the summer heat—yesterday for businessman Eddie Gil when the Supreme Court upheld the Commission on Elections' ruling that declared him a nuisance candidate seeking the presidency.

The poll body's First Division yesterday also canceled the registration of Gil's Partido Isang Bansa Isang Diwa (Pibid) after it said the party failed to get 10 percent of the votes in the 2001 elections. Gil garnered only 15, 522 votes out of the 12.1 million cast—or only. 00127897 percent—way below the required 10 percent, the Comelec added.

The high court said Gil failed to "sufficiently show" that the Comelec committed any grave abuse of discretion when it decided to disqualify him on April 1. "On the contrary, the ruling appears to be in accord with the facts and applicable law and jurisprudence," it said.

Gil's hopes of running for president were revived after the Supreme Court issued a "status quo" order on April 13 allowing him to campaign while the justices deliberated on his petition.

In his petition for certiorari, Gil claimed the Comelec's Second Division committed a grave abuse of discretion when it declared him a nuisance candidate on March 16. He also noted that when he filed a motion for reconsideration with the Comelec en banc, the electoral body did not even bother to hold a hearing or require the respondents to comment on his motion, and instead dismissed his appeal outright on April Fool's Day.

The Comelec's Second Division, on the other hand, cited Section 60 of the Omnibus Election Code saying any registered political party that fails to obtain 10 percent of the votes cast shall be deemed to have forfeited its status as a political party.

GIL

"With the cancelation of the registration of Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa, intervenors Gerardo Al del Mundo and Iderlina Pagunuran are hereby declared as independent candidates for senator in the coming elections," it added.

The petition against Pibid was filed by Honesto Isleta of Eddie Villanueva's Bangon Pilipinas who pointed out that Gil's party failed to get the required 10 percent vote in the 2001 elections.

Gil, who had promised to pay the country's debts if elected president, said he should not be disqualified since he has "all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications for president."

He even produced an ING Bank certificate showing that he has a $10 billion account with the bank, but ING had denied having issued Gil such a certificate.

The Comelec, through the Office of the Solicitor General, had asked the high court to immediately dismiss Gil's petition, saying that Gil's entertainment value was "wearing thin."

"In the antics he has so far exhibited, (Gil) has put the election process in mockery or disrepute. He has caused confusion among the voters by the similarity of his name with candidate Eddie Villanueva, who parenthetically has long been known as Bro. Eddie. He has not proved the bona fide intention to run for the presidency," the Comelec added.

The elections body said the evidence against Gil were overwhelming, citing his failure to pay his hotel bills and campaign expenses, the desertion of some members of his senatorial ticket, glaring discrepancies in his various certificates of candidacies, and his propensity to evade payment of his community tax, among others.

"At any rate, if there is any error in its analysis of the facts and its evaluation of the evidence, it is not of such degree as may be stigmatized as a grave abuse of discretion. The Comelec has nothing personal against Gil," it added.

Asked to comment on the decision, Gil's lawyer Romeo Igot said they would ask the Supreme Court to declare the commissioners in contempt for violating the restraining order issued by the High Court regarding Gil's disqualification. He added that they would file a petition for certiorari, appeal the decision, and continue the campaign.

Gil was optimistic that he would prevail, but sent a strong warning to his "oppressors."

"*Sa kagagawan ng* Comelec, *mas lalo akong magiging presidente. Inaapi nila ako. Yung nagbigay ng desisyon makikitid ang utak*, God will punish them. *Iaapila namin ito. Magkakaroon tayo ng* general ruling. *Lahat ng* (inaudible) *patayin natin*...(Because of this, I will be president. They have been oppressing me and those who made the decision will be punished by God. I will issue a general ruling. They will be killed)," Gil said.

"*Yung dalawang iyan, talagang iyan ipapabitay ko dahil walang hustisya* (Those two commissioners will be hanged. There is no justice)," he added, without identifying the two officials.

Bro. Eddie takes show to Makati

By Blanche S. Rivera

DETERMINED to show force once more, supporters of evangelist Eduardo Villanueva will troop to Makati today to stage a rally "reminiscent of the anti-Marcos protests" to show their disdain for corruption in government.

A shower of yellow confetti will receive an expected 100,000 people that includes retired military officers, show business personalities, visual artists, lawyers, doctors and other professionals backing Villanueva, standard bearer of the Bangon Pilipinas party.

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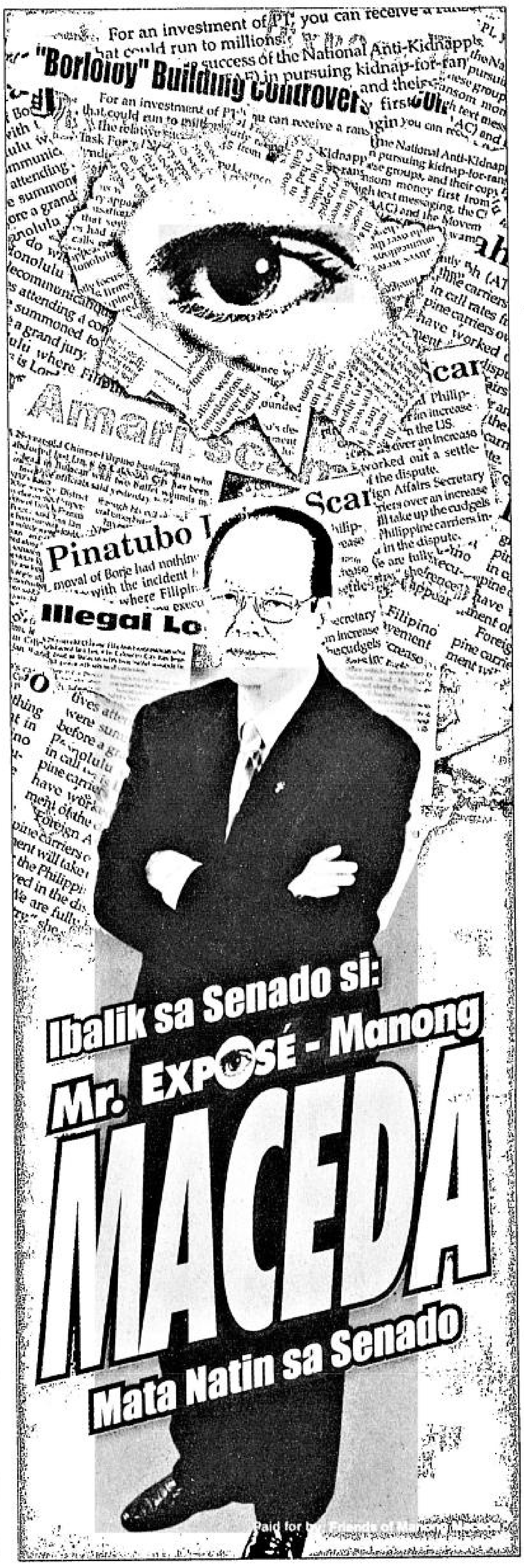

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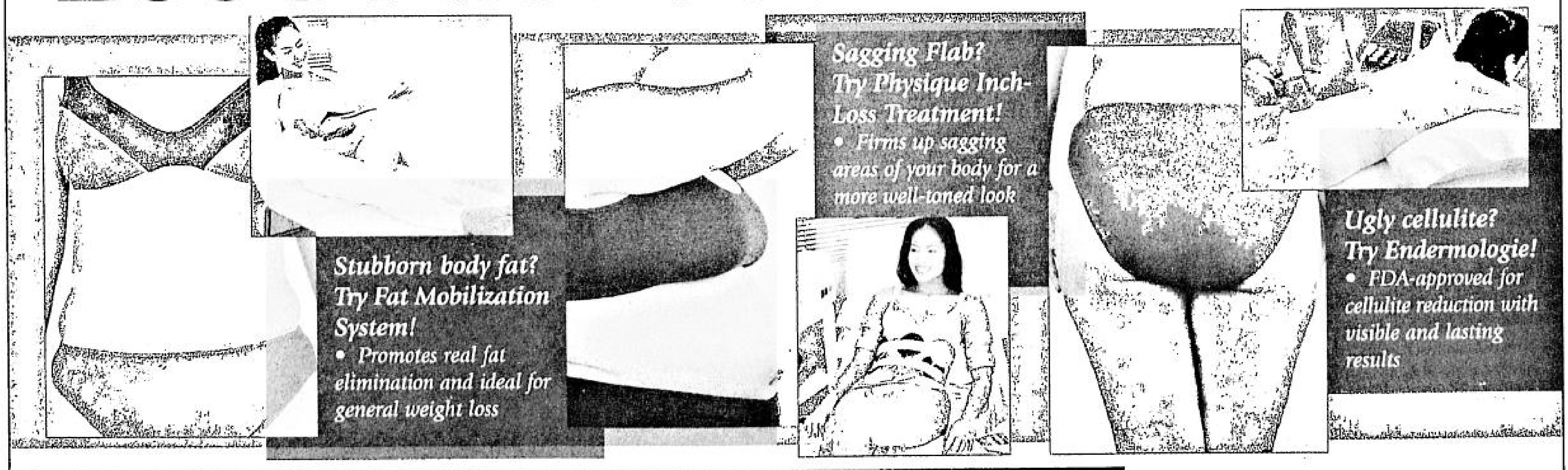

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PDI named Child-Friendly Newspaper by Unicef, PPI

From page A1

the Philippine Press Institute.

It was the second consecutive award for the paper and the third in a row for JI from the two bodies. The awards were presented at the Unicef-PPI Child-Friendly Newspaper and Journalist Awards ceremony held Tuesday at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

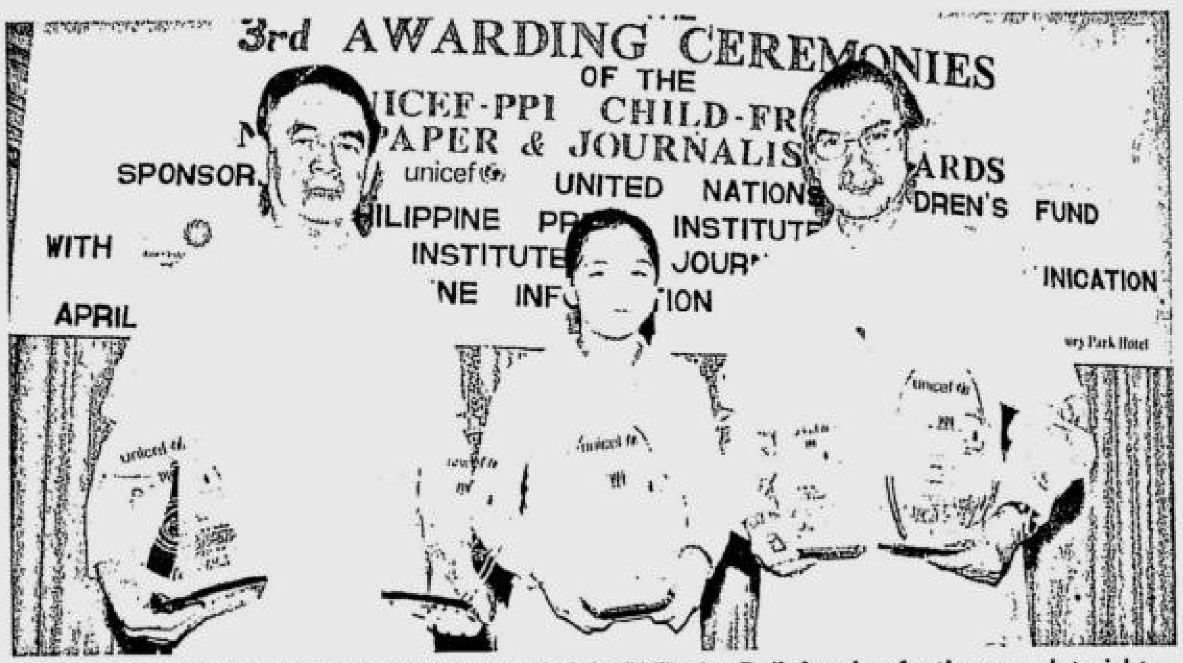
INQUIRER opinion columnist Randy David won the Outstanding Column on Children award for his "Mornings with Julia," published on Dec. 7, 2003, under his column "Public Lives."

Julia is David's granddaughter.

Another INQUIRER opinion columnist, Michael Tan, received a special citation as Best Column Writer on Children, national broadsheet category, for his "Pinoy Kasi."

JI contributor Julien Ragudo Dio, 12, was named Outstanding Child Writer for her article, "I am what I am," published on March 8, 2003.

Dio, an incoming seventh-grader at the Miriam College in Quezon City, wrote about her experience with her medical condition—she was born without an esophagus and doctors fashioned one from a portion of her large intestine.



CHILD-FRIENDLY Newspaper for 2003 is awarded the Philippine Daily Inquirer for the second straight year by the **UNICEF** and the Philippines Press Institute and the third straight year for Junior Inquirer. In Photo are PDI publisher Isagani Yambot, JI contributor Julien Dio, outstanding child writer of the year and Randy David for outstanding column on children. ROGER MARGALLO

"I'm not sure when I realized that there was nothing to be embarrassed about myself," she wrote. "I am just like anyone else. My appearance may be different but I am also a person who can laugh and enjoy things!"

The award-giving body was established to recognize the crucial role of the print media in promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is supported by the Unicef and PPI in cooperation with the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and the Philippine Information Agency.

The other winners were:

- The Mindanao Daily Mirror and its weekly sister publication, The Mindanao Mirror Bulletin, Child-Friendly Newspaper of the Year in the community daily and weekly categories.
- Gemma Bagayaua of Newsbreak, Outstanding Story on Children (magazine) for her article, "Math, Science and the Koran."
- Stella A. Estremera of the Sun.Star Davao Weekend, Outstanding Story on Children (newspaper) for her article, "Beyond Shelter."

Marked improvement

Dale Rutstein, chief of communication for Unicef-Philippines and a member of the board of judges, said he had noted a marked improvement in this year's entries.

Rutstein said the majority of stories last year were about sick or dying children whose families were trying to raise money for their medical treatment.

"Those kinds of stories continually showing children as helpless, poor, powerless victims of disease or one thing or another—they don't help people to value the rights of children that much," he said.

Fresh from the 4th World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents, Rutstein said young people from various parts of the world had lamented the tendency of the media to stereotype them.

He said data suggested "that journalists portray two extreme pictures of children—on the one hand, the prodigy, the super-achiever that we all love to applaud and celebrate, and on the other hand, the victim or the criminal."

He quoted the children as saying they wanted programs and information that would help them understand the world better.

Well-rounded image

Rutstein said that for the child-friendly media awards, the judges looked for stories that delved deeper into the issues affecting children, gave them the opportunity to be heard, and reminded people of their rights.

He said this year's entries showed a "much more well-rounded image of the child" and "more quality reporting from a larger number of publications."

"And there was more in-depth reporting on tough issues that affect children—issues like juvenile justice, armed conflict, sexual abuse, and education," he said, adding:

"I'd like to think that this trend has something to do with the impact of these awards."

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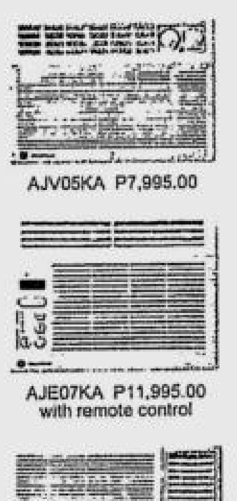

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Cagayan-Iligan rail project back on track

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE PHILIPPINE National Railways yesterday turned over to Mindanao leaders the P55-million feasibility study to complete the final phase of preparations for the Cagayan de Oro-Iligan City rail line, the first rail project in Mindanao in over a hundred years.

Construction on the first of four planned new rail lines that will crisscross Mindanao was scheduled to start in the next four months by a consortium, backed by the Thai and German governments, according to Speaker Jose de Venecia.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the go-signal in mid-2003 to build the long-awaited Cagayan de Oro-Iligan rail line, which will extend to the Misamis Oriental Export Processing Zone, Phividec.

De Venecia has proposed modernizing the country's rail system. It came immediately after the the ground-breaking two weeks ago of the North Rail in Luzon which runs from Caloocan City north to San Fernando La Union.

The feasibility study, which cost $1 million, was a gift of Thailand's Thaipicon Industrial Company at no cost to the Philippine government. A major rail developer in Thailand, Thaipicon's Mindanao rail project will be financed by the Thai Export-Import Bank, owned by the Thai government.

The project was also being backed by the German Siemens Group, which will be backed by the German government's KFV soft-loan financial institution.

Mindanao rail

Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Vicente Emano and Iligan City Mayor Franklin Quijano received the feasibility study from the Philippine National Railways and the Coordinator of the Mindanao Railways, Gene Mamondiong.

Mamondiong was appointed by President Arroyo to develop the Mindanao rail system.

Also present to witness the turn-over were Representatives Constantino Jaraula of Cagayan de Oro City, Alipio Badelles and Abdullah Dimaporo of Lanao del Norte, and Oscar Moreno and Augusto Baculio of Misamis Oriental.

Baculio and De Venecia were instrumental in promoting the 2,000-km Mindanao rail, whose first phase is the Cagayan de Oro-Iligan line. Baculio witnessed the signing of the Mindanao-wide rail agreement in New Delhi last month.

"This will open Mindanao to a whole new era of economic development and social transformation," said De Venecia.

He told local leaders he and the President jointly conceived the project as part of a Mindanao-wide program to "build the economy, defeat poverty, terrorism, and help promote the political and economic unity of Mindanao."

Mamondiong said the 120-km Cagayan de Oro-Iligan rail line has been approved by the PNR board of directors and now awaits final approval by the Department of Finance and the National Economic Development Authority (Neda), following transmittal by the Department of Transportation and Communications.

The Thai and German governments and their Official Development Assistance agencies will jointly finance the construction of the project.

The North Rail, financed by an unprecedented concessional loan from the Chinese government, will revive rail transport from Manila to San Fernando, La Union that has been abandoned for 25 years.

Also expected to be launched soon will be the South Rail running from Manila South to Matnog in Sorsogon province. The Manila-Calamba line will be financed by the South Korean government while the Calamba to Matnog by the Chinese government.

Also being completed were the feasibility studies for the Iligan-Zamboanga Line, the Cagayan de Oro-Agusan-Surigao Line, and the extension to Davao City and General Santos City, being funded by the Thai, German, Austrian, French, and Indian Consortia, supported by their governments, Mamondiong said.

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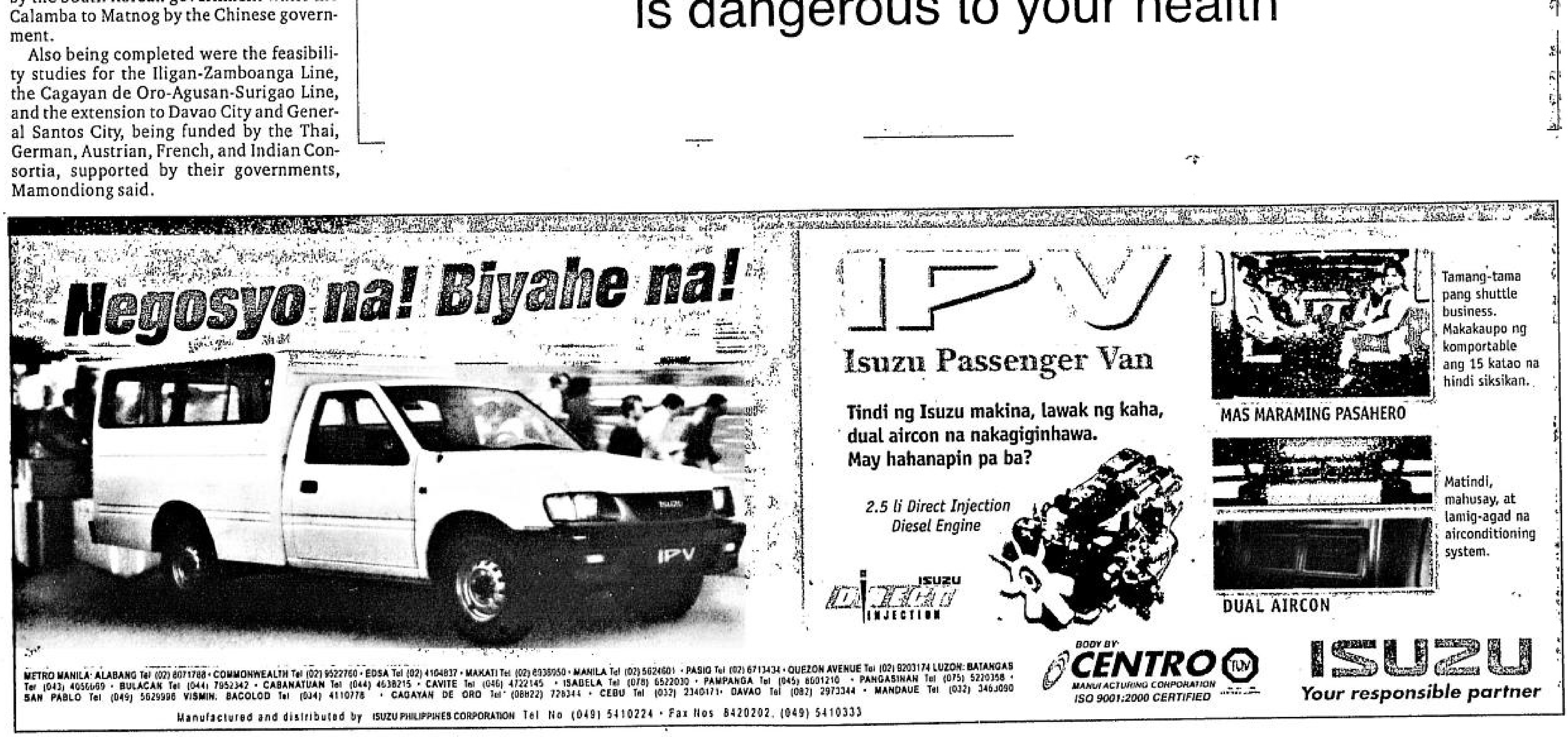

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For the benefit of all retirees and pensioners, registration fee is Php150. Souvenir T-shirts, ladies walking shoes and face towels (until supply lasts) will be given free to early registrants. A team of medical doctors and their competent staff will be on hand to render free medical check-up, medicines and vitamins. A Php 50,000 Personal Accident Insurance coverage with Accidental Medical Reimbursement up to Php2,500 from the Phil. Phoenix Surety & Ins., Inc. are also available free to qualified registrants.

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Tax break for foreign banks restored

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the law restoring the tax exemptions once enjoyed by offshore banking units (OBU) in a bid to attract more foreign currency deposits in the country.

The law amending sections of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP) exempts earnings from foreign currency transactions of OBUs, non-residents and local commercial banks from all taxes except the final tax rate of 10 percent.

These tax exemptions were removed in 1997 with the sweeping tax reforms under the CTRP.

The withdrawal of these perks had led to a substantial decline in the foreign currency deposit unit (FCDU) accounts in the country from P25.5 billion in 1997 to P17.8 billion last year. Without the tax perks, the number of OBUs have also dwindled from 18 to 9, a trend which the President hopes to reverse with the signing of the new law.

In a briefing, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye cited the importance of boosting the FCDU assets in the country in boosting the country's international reserves and maintaining the stability of the peso.

Also, the FCDU assets are used to lend out to exporters, oil companies, public utilities, producers and manufacturers that deal in foreign currencies.

3 provinces eyed for Comelec control

By Martin P. Marfil

THE COMMISSION on Elections may put three provinces under "Comelec control," which means all military and police deployment, as well as fund disbursements would be under the control of the election body.

This was announced by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos who foresees violence erupting in the following areas: the municipalities in or the provinces of Masbate, Catanduanes, Mindoro and Abra.

If a province is placed under Comelec control, the election provincial supervisor takes over. If it's a municipality, then the election officer will control.

Abalos said the Comelec or a task force would take over the fielding of personnel, the military and police, as well as the disbursement of funds.

He added that he does not want to put any area under Comelec control but "we have no choice but to do it in order to save human lives."

Since Dec. 15, the Philippine National Police reported 70 election-related incidents which killed 65 persons and wounded 127 others throughout the country.

Authorities believe the figures will rise before the election period ends on June 9.

The PNP said Zamboanga del Sur had the highest with seven incidents and seven persons dead, followed by Masbate with four incidents and four persons killed. Isabela has four incidents and one person dead, while Samar has four incidents and two persons killed.

The Comelec also came out with Resolution No. 6712 which contains the guidelines for Comelec Quick Count.

The 20-page document outlines how the electronic count would be conducted, how results would be made available to the public through Internet, text messaging and electronic billboards in designated locations.

The commission also forged a draft resolution acknowledging Lakas as the dominant majority party and the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino as the dominant minority party.

Lakas will get the fifth copy of the election returns while the KNP will get the sixth copy.

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Lifestyle flunkers watched on poll expenses

By Armand N. Nocum

LIFESTYLE check flunkers running for office have something else to worry about other than losing the elections.

top official of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission yesterday said they will look into the campaign expenditures of alleged corrupt officials. If they are found to have spent millions on their campaigns, the PAGC could use this as evidence to charge them as having enriched themselves while in office.

"We can use this as evidence against them," said PAGC Commissioner Teresita Baltazar, referring to the huge campaign expense of government officials who failed the lifestyle check, but who have decided to run for office to vindicate themselves.

The lifestyle check flunkers running for office are: former Transportation assistant secretary Rene Maglanque, BIR collector Lucien E. Sayuno and Department of Public Works and Highways bureau of maintenance director Luisito Visorde.

Maglanque, who was charged with graft before the PAGC early this year, resigned to run for Congress in Pampanga under the administration party.

Sayuno, who is running for mayor in Dasmariñas, Cavite, is believed to have amassed millions in ill-gotten wealth, exceeding his declared Statement of Assets and Liabilities of P3.3 million in 2002.

Department of Finance investigators said that Sayuno reportedly failed to declare ownership of three companies, a house and lot in Ayala Alabang, and 12 luxury vehicles which include a BMW, Toyota Land Cruiser, Ford Expedition and Mercedes Benz.

dti Bantay Bilihin PRICE MONITOR In Metro Manila

Bantay Bilihin is the Department of Trade and Industry's program that aims to address various components of price and supply stabilization. This price monitoring guide is the consumer's reference on the average prices of selected basic goods and prime commodities. The items listed below are some of the most common necessities we buy.

DTI and the Department of Agriculture monitor around 36 select markets in Metro Manila that are accessible and with heavy consumer traffic and trading activity.

Prices in different markets may be higher or lower than the average price.

BASIC & PRIME COMMODITIES (Monitored by DTI)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	AVERAGE PRICE (As of April 23 2004)	PRICE RANGE		AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (March 2004)
Canned Fish (155g)			7.00	9.50	
555	-	8.11			8.10
Youngstown		8.76			8.79
Hakala	-	8.13			8.11
Master	8.35	8.28			8.28
Ligo	-	8.44			8.44
Instant Noodles (Chicken/55g)			4.00	5.75	
Lucky Me	-	4.73			4.73
Maggi	5.25	5.16			5.15
Payless	-	4.34			4.32
Nissin s Ramen	-	4.98			4.98
Powdered Filled Milk (180g)			30.00	36.00	
Alaska	36.00	34.08			33.01
Bear Brand	36.00	34.27			33.26
Coffee (25g Refill)			10.75	15.50	
Blend 45	-	12.44			12.36
Nescafe	14.40	14.36			14.33
Café Puro	-	12.67			12.67
Great Taste	-	13.00			13.02
Laundry Soap (400g)			21.75	27.00	
Perla	26.00	24.28			24.26
Wheel	22.00	22.64			22.64
Detergent Bar (480g)			13.00	25.00	
Surf	14.20	14.74			14.76
Mr Clean	-	14.41			14.36
Tide	20.00	22.92			23.07
Breeze	23.95	23.36			23.40

COMMODITY (Monitored by DA-BAS)	AVERAGE PRICE (April 24, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Week Ago (April 17, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (March 2004)
Meat and Poultry			
Beef Brisket (per kilo)	143.68	143.68	143.68
Egg (Medium/per piece)	3.23	3.23	3.57
Fish (per kilo)			
Bangus	82.18	89.17	93.38
Tilapia	68.09	70.64	70.19
Galunggong	68.09	72.64	74.51
Rice (per kilo)			
Ordinary	18.57	18.57	18.65
Special	22.57	22.57	22.44
Premium	25.77	25.72	25.71
Fancy	32.67	32.67	32.70
Sugar (per kilo)			
Refined	26.45	26.45	26.55
Brown	22.23	22.23	22.58

MEAT AND POULTRY (Monitored by DA-BAI)	FARMGATE PRICE As of April 23, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	WHOLESALE PRICE As of April 23, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE As of April 23, 2004 (Price per Kilo)
Chicken (Dressed)	65.00	83.00	96.67
Pork	85.60	112.08	141.42

CEMENT (40kg Bag)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE (Pick Up & Cash Price per Bag as of April 23, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE (Pick Up & Cash Price per Bag as of April 23, 2004)
Island	125.00	127.20
Union	125.00	130.40

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For Meat and Poultry, call the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry- 920-3906
For other Agricultural Commodities, call the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics-371-2078

Diplomatic posts told to tighten security

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs has instructed all Philippine diplomatic posts around the world to upgrade their security and revise their contingency measures following reported threats against the country's interest abroad.

DFA spokesperson Julia Heidemann said the Secretary Delia Albert, department undersecretaries and top foreign service officials met late Monday to implement President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive for the 81 diplomatic posts to coordinate with host countries on "intensified security measures...to thwart any terrorist attempt."

"We expect the host countries to give adequate security to our diplomats, including their offices, the way we give security to their counterparts here," she told reporters.

Heidemann said the state of alert for each embassy or consulate depended on the situation. She said some embassies, including Baghdad, Bangkok, Seoul, Washington D.C. and Riyadh should be more wary about their security than the others.

It's final: Roa-Rasul bid vs GMA junked

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court yesterday denied with finality the petition of two opposition senatorial candidates to declare President Macapagal-Arroyo as resigned or on leave from the highest office for allegedly using government resources in her bid for the presidency.

In a minute resolution, dated April 27, the SC junked the motion for reconsideration of Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino candidates Ma. Elisa "Boots" Anson-Roa and Amina Rasul-Bernardo on their petition to unseat Ms Macapagal.

The tribunal said that the issues raised by the petitioners had been discussed before and "no substantial arguments were presented to warrant the reversal" of its March 30 ruling.

While 10 justices, including Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., voted to deny Roa and Bernardo's motion for reconsideration, three justices stood by their dissent in the March ruling.

Associate Justices Reynato Puno, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago and Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez maintained their earlier position that the petition should be heard based on the other issues raised by Roa and Rasul and not on their plea that the Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. replace Ms Macapagal as President.

Justice Renato Corona is on leave.

In its March 30 decision, the tribunal dismissed Roa and Bernardo's petition for lack of jurisdiction and cause of action.

The SC said it had no jurisdiction to rule on the petitioners' plea that Guingona should replace Ms Macapagal as President.

No basis

"There is simply no basis under the Constitution or any law that supports a cause of action to compel the President in this case to resign or go on leave by virtue of her running for the presidency," the SC said.

Roa and Bernardo appealed the ruling on April 16, insisting that while the Constitution allows Ms Macapagal to run for the presidency, it does not allow her to run and "remain as President with all the concomitant powers and duties of that office."

The 1987 Constitution prohibits an elected President from running for reelection. Those who succeeded as President and has served for more than four years are also disqualified from reelection.

Ms Macapagal assumed the presidency in January 2001 after the Edsa Dos revolt ousted former President Joseph Estrada from office.

The SC said she is not covered by the ban against those who succeeded as President since she has not served for more than four years after replacing Estrada. Ms Macapagal is not barred from seeking the presidency either, since "she was not elected President before," it added.

The petitioners said that while there is no prohibition against the President from running for another term, there is a "clear injunction against remaining in office and campaigning at the same time and using government resources to support her reelection."

They alleged that Ms Macapagal has blatantly used public funds and resources for her campaign, in violation of the Omnibus Elections Code and the Fair Elections Act.

The tribunal said: "It is the Commission on Elections which has primary jurisdiction over alleged violations of election laws. Furthermore, factual issues are involved, necessitating a suit in a forum that is a trier of facts."

RM essay contest to be held in Korea

LEADERSHIP among Asian women takes center stage in Korea as the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF), in cooperation with the Ewha Women's University (Ewha), holds the first Asian run of the Ramon Magsaysay Student Essay Competition.

The contest is open to the 17,000 undergraduate students of the world's largest women's university. Participants are to write a reflection, reaction or opinion piece in English on their chosen Ewha alumnae and other women who have been honored with the RM Award, Asia's premier prize.

The RM Award was established in 1957, inspired by the late Filipino President's sense of selfless service as he championed the cause of democracy and the common man.

A total of 236 individuals, 50 of them women, and organizations across Asia have been honored since the first awards were given in 1958.

Of the 13 awardees from Korea, three are Ewha alumnae: Dr. Helen Kim (1963 awardee for public service), Dr. Lee Tai-young (1975, for community leadership), and Kim Im Soon (1989, for community leadership).

An all-expense-paid trip to the Philippines via Asiana Airlines awaits the grand prize winner. The tour prize from the RMAF will allow the winner to attend the conferment of the 2004 RM Awardees as well as their public lectures, and to experience cultural immersion in selected Philippine sites.

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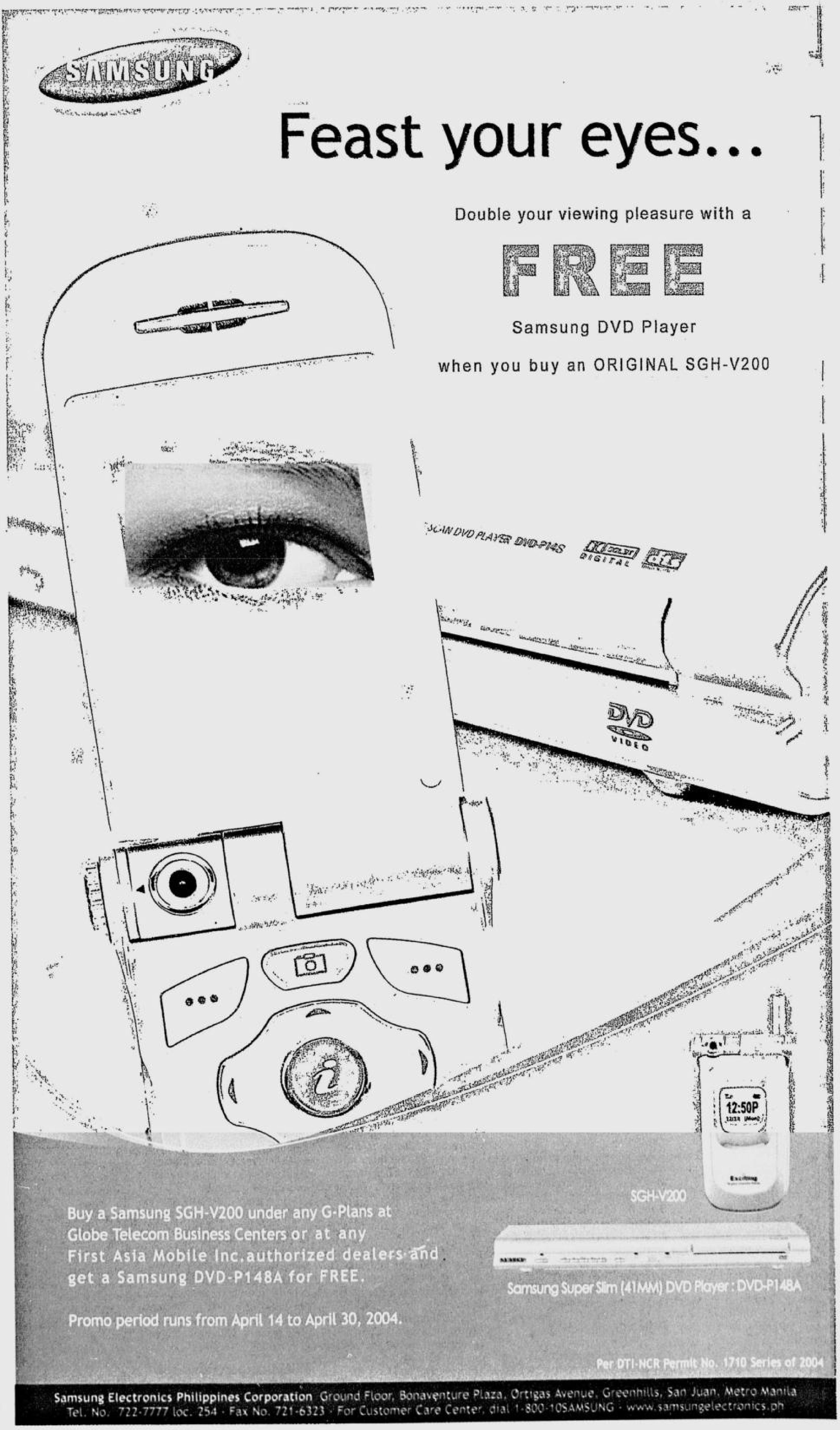

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Roco evasive on real illness

From page A1

cy of my pain," he told an airport press conference when asked when he would release the doctors' medical bulletin on him.

"I will not die very soon. That is confirmed by all the (tests done). I have a good 10 years."

Asked if the prostate cancer for which he was operated on eight years ago had recurred, Roco said: "The prostate malignancy was removed successfully in 1996."

Such a form of malignancy usually afflict males in their 50s, he said.

"After 50 (years old), almost all males have prostate cancer. The risk of dying, or getting debilitated if you manage it well becomes less and less. After 60, apparently, the risk of death is a result of foolishness, but only 9 percent still die of prostate cancer."

He said that "beyond 65, or as you grow older, the risk of death is again the result of more foolishness, but only 3 percent die."

"That is what it (medical bulletin) says. That I'm unhindered in the performance of all public functions. I am treated, and my pain can be under control," said Roco.

It depends on stage

A urologist that the Inquirer consulted said: "Your prostate gland normally enlarges as you get older. However the enlargement may either be due to natural aging process (benign prostatichypertrophy) or it can be cancer. But since prostate cancer is usually a slow non-aggressive tumor (some are aggressive), the patient dies because of old age rather than the cancer itself. Bottom line: even though he has cancer, his survival and prognosis will all depend on what stage is the cancer and how aggressive the tumor is (grade)."

"I am well, I feel good, I feel grateful," Roco said.

Reading from a prepared statement, he said: "I am glad to report that my doctors, after a series of tests, confirmed that my physical pain can be treated and kept under control."

Life so frail

"There is no immediate threat to my life and ability to perform all functions of public office remains unhindered."

At one point in the press conference, Roco even raised a fist to stress a point.

But the prepared statement he read, which a nephew said took his uncle 11 hours to draft, revise and finalize during a Hong Kong stopover, also spoke of his own mortality.

"These past two weeks gave me time to look into myself," the statement said. "I confess to having harbored ambition, conceit and egoism, all the things that flesh is heir to. But all of that disappears in the recognition of mortality, or knowledge that life is so frail."

Describing his campaign as a "crusade for hope," Roco said it was no longer a matter of winning the May 10 election but saving a sick country.

Power of miracles

Then the statement spoke of the power of miracles.

"I am a believer in miracles—faith in God in the name of Jesus, faith in the intercession of Ina, Our Lady of Peñafrancia, faith in the Sto. Niño. I do not know that they will work a miracle for me, but I know that they will have the compassion to work a miracle for the Philippines.

Roco told reporters he "shared ... (the) same (prostate) condition with Sen. John Kerry, the leading Democratic candidate (in the US presidential race), Nelson Mandela and, believe it or not, Sean Connery."

But he quickly asserted: "It must be managed, in fact, one of the results indicate how it can be managed better."

Managing condition

Asked what was going to be managed about his condition, he said: "But that is not material anymore."

Roco refused to divulge other details of his medical bulletin, the kind of tests he underwent in Houston, Texas, and the names of the hospital and the doctors who treated him.

He was complaining of lower back pains when he left on April 13 at the height of his presidential campaign.

Roco said every Filipino doctor he had talked to and all the physicians that attended to him had "found it curious that I was so worried about it."

"Just manage it well, and it will now be managed, as a result of all the tests, by my Philippine doctors," he said.

Asked if he was still under medication, he said: "With 250 milligrams of Ponstan."

Orthopedic surgeons say chronic back pains could be a symptom of a wide range of ailments, ranging from something as minor as muscle strain to something as serious as a cancer that has metastasized.

Low back pain

A powerpoint presentation given the Inquirer by Philippine Orthopedic Center medical specialist Jose Pujalte Jr. stated that low back pain, or LBP, "may be a prelude to a more serious disease entity."

Low back pain is the most common cause of disability among people aged 45 and below.

Pujalte said that LBP could be triggered by a whole range of conditions like muscle strain, osteoarthritis, herniated disc, kidney disorder, various gynecologic, psychogenic and vascular factors, infection and—in the worst cases—a metastasized tumor or late-stage tumor that has spread to the bones.

"The doctor can give you a clean bill of health even if you have, say, osteoarthritis, as long as it is not bothering you," Pujalte said in an interview at the Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Manila.

Pujalte was the same doctor who testified before the Sandiganbayan in 2002 that former President Joseph Estrada did not need to go abroad for a knee operation because the country had sufficient facilities for the surgery.

Cause must be diagnosed

Experts said that there was no way of assessing Roco's condition unless the cause of his LBP was diagnosed.

"There is enough expertise and facilities here to treat conditions related to back pains, but treatment options still depended on the patient and cause of back pain," said Rodolfo Nitollama, president of the Philippine Orthopedic Association (POA).

There are more than 450 certified orthopedic surgeons in the Philippines.

Roco's decision to seek treatment in the United States was a matter of "patient responsibility and personal preference," said Pujalte, who heads the Doctors for Roco Movement.

Doubt

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said of Roco's health problem: "If it turns out to be a very serious condition, it could put in doubt his physical fitness to run the country for the next six years."

About 90 percent of the population would experience low back pain in their lifetime. It is treated through medication, non-pharmacological means like bed rest and physical therapy, and orthopedic surgery.

People's vulnerability to LBP depends on their activity and occupation, age, pregnancy, posture, sports like golf, tennis, gymnastics. *With a report from Blanche S. Rivera*

FPJ, Ping find . . .

From page A1

date, Carlos Padilla, was talking with evangelist Eddie Villanueva's camp.

"There are still no mechanics," Lacson said when asked if by cooperation, he meant that he and Poe would share copies of election returns and poll watchers.

Asked if another meeting was being planned to discuss vote-security measures and a possible last-ditch shot at unification, Lacson said: "Yes, there is another meeting scheduled."

But Poe is clueless about such a meeting.

Asked if there would be a next meeting with Lacson, he said: *"Hindi ko pa alam."*

"Well, it's a start," was all he said when asked why he and Lacson had agreed only to cooperate against election fraud.

Poe's spokesperson, Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, said such a cooperation was a more distinct "possibility."

Asked in a phone interview about the question of Poe's withdrawal from the race or sliding down to No. 2, Escudero said: "Even before, we have prepared to campaign with Lacson running separately as presidential candidate."

Poe or Ping as winner

Lacson said in his statement that even if both he and Poe ran for president, President Macapagal-Arroyo would still not win "provided we are able to prevent cheating."

"It's going to be Poe or Ping. And Poe acknowledged that [Tuesday] night," Lacson said.

He also told the Inquirer that the atmosphere of the meeting was "more friendly this time."

"Probably we both realized the futile efforts toward putting up one presidential candidate," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm not backing out. It's either we both go for it or I become the standard-bearer. [But we agreed that] the only way [Ms Macapagal] can win is to cheat, and cheat successfully."

Lacson assailed Poe's principal backer, Sen. Edgardo Angara, and personal campaign manager, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, for failing to submit the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino to a selection process that would have solved the problem of the opposition having two candidates.

He said Angara, LDP president, and Sotto had railroaded the selection process in Poe's favor.

"It is on record that Angara and Sotto denied me a fair selection process when they chose to organize the [KNP] and unilaterally selected Poe as their standard-bearer based merely on his survey rating," Lacson said in his statement.

Pimentel, however, said a review of events since the start of the campaign season would show that Lacson had "put up obstacles to the unification of the opposition."

Murphy's Law

Murphy's Law—that if something will go wrong, it will—seems to be bedeviling Poe's homestretch campaign.

On top of his tumbling survey ratings and the impasse with Lacson, his private plane broke down, resulting in his failure yesterday to make it to the Basilan capital city of Isabela, for a "light rally" of the KNP.

The rally was scheduled for 8:15-9:45 a.m., and members of Poe's senatorial slate had all finished their campaign speeches.

But there was no Poe. The local leaders who organized the rally repeatedly pleaded to the crowd to stay.

Poe's original schedule included having lunch in Zamboanga City before proceeding to select areas in Zamboanga del Sur and del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay.

'Still mobbed'

But at 10:30 a.m., he was still in Manila trying to find an aircraft to take him south.

He later arrived in Zamboanga City in another private plane at about 1:30 p.m.

Interviewed at the airport, he said there was something wrong with his plane's brakes.

His campaign staff later announced that Poe proceeded from the airport to Basilan by chopper, arrived at about 2 p.m., and "was still mobbed by the people of Isabela."

Alyansa bet vows to fight 'till the end'

From page A1

Many in the crowd gathered below, including bank and insurance employees who had left their offices, chanted his name and Roco shook hands with some of them.

Elsewhere, cars honked their horns to cheer him, while pedestrians flashed the Alyansa hand sign in a gesture of welcome.

Coming from the Naia, the motorcade—numbering 1,000 vehicles, by Alyansa's estimate—received a massive show of support from people wearing yellow, white and red shirts, Roco's battle colors.

Traffic jam

The line of well-wishers extended from the Airport Road to Baclaran Church on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City, causing a horrendous traffic jam.

The entourage took more than 30 minutes to get out of Airport Road.

Yellow and blue ribbons fluttered from trees along Roxas Boulevard as the motorcade passed through.

Opponents cheer

Roco's opponents also cheered his return.

"That's very good news," Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. said on hearing that Roco was not suffering from any grave illness.

"If it's benign, then that's okay," Poe added, noting people generally thought that cancer always killed its victims.

Asked if he had a message for Roco, Poe said: "Well, *pare* (mate), I hope you are feeling better now and I hope to see you one of these days."

"Of course," the actor replied when asked if he wanted to see Roco back on the campaign trail.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said it was Roco's call not to talk about his real health condition. Roco has given few details about the results of his medical tests in the United States, except that he was fit to resume his campaign and that his illness was not fatal. *(See banner story on Page A1.)*

Speculation had been rife that the prostate cancer for which he was operated on in 1996 had recurred.

"This is something that is for Secretary Roco to divulge, that is really his privilege but we're glad to see him (back)," Bunye said.

"We believe that Secretary Roco would be a very worthy participant in this electoral process."

Roco's call

Asked if Roco should be more honest and transparent about his ailment, Bunye told reporters: "That's Senator Roco's call. As far as we're concerned, we're just happy to see him back."

Bunye said that whether or not Roco pushed through with his candidacy was up to him.

"But the President has earlier said that Secretary Roco is a very worthy opponent and we need people like him who has been campaigning on issues."

Bunye said "it really depends" on Roco's supporters whether to stick by him or go for other presidential candidates.

"There are some people who will stick with Senator Roco through thick and thin, there are some who will review the situation but we're saying we're glad to see him again," Bunye said.

"The Filipino is worth fighting for," Roco said on arrival, paraphrasing the famous words uttered by the late Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino who was gunned down at the airport in 1983 on his return from exile.

"The Filipino will overcome," he said as the motorcade briefly stopped near the monument of Aquino at the corner of Paseo de Roxas and Ayala avenues.

"If blessed by the Filipino people I will serve. And I will serve well!"

Conspicuously, Roco was wearing a yellow shir—the signature color of the anti-dictatorship movement launched by Aquino's widow, Corazon, which eventually forced Ferdinand Marcos out of power in 1986.

Roco, who traveled for one and a half hour from Hong Kong with wife Sonia and three other family members (daughter Neena, brother Facundo, and nephew Ninoy), arrived at 10:51 a.m. via Cathay Pacific flight 901.

Both Facundo and Ninoy, along with this reporter and two other television reporters, had accompanied the Rocos from Hong Kong.

Roco said he had to make a brief stop in Hong Kong to take a day-long rest, and finalize his arrival speech, before proceeding to Manila.

Interviewed by the Inquirer before boarding the plane in Hong Kong, Roco declared that he was "very happy to be back... I'm coming home."

Asked about possible security threats in Manila on his return, he said: "But I cannot change now. The people must make the change."

The Rocos were fetched from the airport by running-mate Herminio Aquino, the seven senatorial candidates, and children Rex, Ponjun, Sinara, Pia, Bobbit and Neena.

Groundswell of support

The day's event was capped by a Mass at the Dela Strada Church on Katipunan Avenue.

Alyansa senatorial candidate Frank Chavez estimated that more than 1,000 cars and vehicles joined the motorcade.

"This is the groundswell of support that will be the turning point of the (Alyansa) campaign," said Chavez.

At a press conference in Naia shortly after he arrived, Roco categorically declared he was continuing his presidential bid.

"Of course, That is why I'm here. I'm running, I came back to fight for every Filipino child, for the many Filipino sick who, nonetheless, work day to day because there is no choice," he said.

Roco was unperturbed by his dipping survey ratings, saying: "Elections are won by the day."

'No money to buy me'

He also took time to bury once and for all rumors that he had been offered money by Malacañang to quit the race.

Raising his voice, Roco said: "That is a lie. They don't have the money to buy me."

This elicited applause from supporters gathered at the Naia VIP lounge.

He then pointed out that the electorate must now all "strive for an honest government of healthy and literate people." *With reports from Christine Avendaño, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Carlito Pablo*

Dead may be able to vote

From page A1

Chair Benjamin Abalos said yesterday.

Abalos said the number of voters might go down by 700,000 to 42.8 million if the list was cleaned up. But he said the list could be cleaned up only after the elections.

The Comelec chair mentioned the presence of the names of the dead in the voters' list a day after election Commissioner Mehol Sadain said that the number of voters had reached 43.5 million. Abalos placed the figure at 42.8 million.

Data from the Comelec's Election and Barangay Affairs Department show that there are 43,534,756 voters who are expected to troop to 215,953 clustered precincts throughout the country.

Abalos said Sadain's figure might have been the result of the collation of the old voters' list, the Voters Registration Records (VRR) and the Certified Voters' List (CVL).

Sadain, who is in charge of validation and registration, had ordered that voters, who could not find their names on the CVL but whose names appeared on the VRRs, could still vote.

"Remember, we are only human beings. Errors could be committed in the migration of these records from one to another. That is why Commissioner Sadain came out with the order," Abalos said at a press briefing.

"Maybe, during their computations, the result was 43 million but actually this includes the names of those in the old list, which have not been cleaned up, and includes the names of dead persons. But once cleaned up, the figure might go down to about 42.8 million," Abalos said.

The Comelec started to seal the Book of Voters on Sunday. This means that the exclusion or inclusion of voters will no longer be allowed, but clerical errors can still be amended in the list of voters.

The poll body had encountered several problems in the creation of the CVL, which was supposed to merge the old list with the list of those who validated their registrations and the list of new registrants.

The names of those who validated and of the new registrants were supposed to be generated by the computers and then merged with the old list so that the data could be centralized.

However, problems cropped up during the process and the Comelec was able to centralize only 20 million out of the 43.5 million names contained in the sealed book of voters.

This was what apparently prompted Sadain to direct Comelec personnel to allow voters whose names appeared in either the Book of Voters or the CVLs to vote.

In an effort to minimize confusion on election day, Abalos said the Comelec planned to post the list of voters at polling places in Metro Manila on Saturday. *With reports from Blanche S. Rivera and Juliet Labog-Javellana*

PNP confirms Yellow-Red terror group real

From page A1

happen on April 30," Goltiao said. "That's why we're beefing up our security."

Quoting a report from the Task Force on Anti-Terrorism, Goltiao said Yellow-Red was indeed eyeing targets in the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, Australia, Pakistan, Kuwait, Thailand and Singapore.

These countries have one thing in common: they're all staunch supporters of the US-led war on terrorism, including the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq.

But local authorities still have no clear idea of Yellow-Red's organizational structure, its possible links with other terrorist groups, and its exact targets in the eight countries, according to Goltiao.

All police units nationwide have been placed on heightened alert status to thwart any attack from Yellow-Red, the Abu Sayyaf, or the Jemaah Islamiyah, the regional affiliate of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

Security at airports and seaports have been tightened to prevent the possible entry of Yellow-Red operatives, he said.

Advisory

In a full-page newspaper ad, the government urged citizens to report "any suspicious person or activity" to protect "critical infrastructure" such as oil depots, power plants, transportation, and government and commercial centers from possible terror attacks.

Because of the threats from terrorists, Canada has reiterated its travel warning to its citizens in the country.

"Threats from various terrorist groups have increased, and reports continue to indicate that terrorist elements throughout the region could be planning attacks," said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

In the light of the upcoming May 10 elections, the recent arrest of suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group and the increased state of alert by Philippine security forces, the ministry told all Canadians to maintain a high level of personal security awareness at all times and monitor local developments, as well as register and remain in regular contact with the Canadian Embassy in Manila.

They were also advised to avoid demonstrations and rallies.

JI major threat to RP

"We have added the JI as a major terror threat to Philippine security because of a series of evidence that we have gathered and the series of arrests in the past years," Gen. Narciso Abaya said after meeting military commanders in Sulu.

12 Abu suspects arrested

Abaya cited last year's arrest of Taufiq Rifqi, an Indonesian suspected of handling finances for JI operatives in the country, and the killing of self-confessed member Fathur Roman al-Ghozi in October, three months after he escaped from a Manila jail.

In Culiat, Quezon City, 12 suspected terrorists, including three alleged Abu Sayyaf members, were arrested during a raid on the Muslim community before dawn yesterday.

Dawabi Ben Albi Maulana and former policemen Talib Masiha Uddin and Arsad Indaman Abduhadi worked directly with slain Abu Sayyaf operative Abdulmukim Ong Edris, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military information officer.

Edris was slain in an alleged shootout with the military last August, less than a month after he joined Indonesian bomber Al-Ghozi and fellow Abu member Omar Opik Lasal in bolting their Camp Crame jail.

Lucero said Maulana and company had been sent to Metro Manila to raise funds for the bandit group through the illegal drug trade. The business, he said, had long been a steady source of income for the Abu Sayyaf particularly in Sulu and Basilan.

"We have sufficient evidence to prove their links with the Abu Sayyaf," the official told the Inquirer. *With reports from Michael Jobert Navallo and Jerome Aning*

Erap granted another pass

By Armand N. Nocum

IT could be his best (advance) gift for his mom on Mother's Day.

For the fourth time, the Sandiganbayan special division has allowed deposed President Estrada to leave his detention quarters at a military camp, this time to join his ailing mother as she celebrates her 99th birthday at her Greenhills residence in San Juan, Metro Manila on May 2, one week before Mother's Day on May 9.

Earlier, Estrada—who is facing graft and plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan—was also permitted to visit his mother in a San Juan hospital, celebrate his birthday and spend Holy Week at his rest house across Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal.

The anti-graft court pointed out that the prosecution was "not interposing any objection" to Estrada's request to spend time with his mother who is suffering from abdominal aneurysm.

In asking for the pass, Estrada had cited the fact that since he was jailed three years ago, he was not allowed to join his mother during her birthday celebrations in San Juan.

"To reach the age of 99 is a rare occasion, and no child would pass the opportunity to be with his mother on that day," said Noel Malaya, Estrada's court-appointed lawyer.

"We have a soft spot for mothers," said Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio, upon learning of Estrada's motion.

The decision to drop their objection, he said, was "more of an accommodation, in consideration of an old and sickly mother's wish to see her son. We are giving in more to the mother's wish," said Villa-Ignacio, considered as Estrada's gadfly in the plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan.

The resolution, signed by Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita V. Chico-Nazario, who also chairs the special division, and Associate Justices Edilberto G. Sandoval and Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, said Estrada could leave the camp at 5 a.m. of May 2. As requested, the former president would be allowed to spend the night with his mother and return to the camp at 5 p.m. the following day.

The court stipulated that he should not be allowed to go to "no other place" than his mother's house in Kennedy Street in San Juan.

It also asked Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, Philippine National Police chief and the Sandiganbayan sheriffs under Eduardo Ureta to implement security measures and to enforce the court's order.

The "control and supervision" of guests visiting Estrada have been placed under the jurisdiction of the police.

As in its previous resolutions, the court disallowed the use of any electronic equipment by Estrada or his guests, as well as media interviews.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 29, 2004
3rd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 8:26-40
Gospel: Jn 6:44-51

Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise him up on the last day. It has been written in the Prophets: They shall all be taught by God. So whoever listens and learns from the Father comes to me.

"For no one has seen the Father except the One who comes from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

"I am the bread of life. Though your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, they died. But here you have the bread which comes from heaven so that you may eat of it and not die.

"I am the living bread which has come from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my flesh and I will give it for the life of the world."

Commentary

A few days after I found the catechism that I mentioned yesterday, I met the man who had it republished. He had been present at a Mass where I made much the same complaint as yesterday. He approached me, holding a copy and smiling! I knew him, a good and forgiving man, and he was not at all aggrieved! He was disturbed, though (as I knew already) by the lack of knowledge of our religion among many people. And that is certainly grounds for being disturbed.

In other times it was believed that we could be pushed into faith—or at least pushed towards it. Strange to say, being pushed makes a person resist. I often thought that if good were forbidden, more people would do it! The best way to move a person is to attract rather than push: we are more easily drawn from in front than driven from behind. "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father" (today's reading). St. Augustine commented on this verse, "Do not suppose here any rough and uneasy violence. It is gentle; it is sweet; it is the very sweetness that draws you."

Attraction is always less clear and less satisfactory than compulsion, but that's our life. Jesus rejected the way of compulsion and chose the way of love. It's messier than any other, sometimes almost chaotic. But the wisdom of the Gospel tells us it is the only one that has no trap built into it.

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Mindanao: Landed, royal clans dominate

From page A1

valuable stands of timber.

Although Mindanao was historically an immigrant destination for settlers from Luzon and the Visayas even in pre-Spanish times, the flow of settlers from these Christian regions accelerated when the post-colonial Philippine state made it a policy to promote migration to Mindanao.

Parceling out this large virgin territory, particularly its timber concessions and vast agricultural plantations, became a matter of politics and access to the centers of national power. Loggers and *hacenderos* entered politics to protect and preserve their economic dominance. Often this meant maintaining large private armies, so that violence has played a bigger role in the rise of political clans in Mindanao than in other regions.

Most of today's Mindanao politicians are scions of the landed clans—the Plazas, the Floirendos, the Lorenzo-Lobregats, the Hofers, the Del Rosarios and others—that were the products of the resource-rich island's development, and the descendants of the traditional hereditary rulers of that part of Mindanao that was Muslim.

There are three traditional hereditary sultanates in Mindanao: Maguindanao which corresponds to today's Maguindanao, North and South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat provinces; the Maranao whose territory covers present-day Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte; and the Sulu sultanate of the Tausugs who had suzerainty over present-day Sulu province, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan in the Philippines and what is now the East Malaysian state of Sabah.

The Spanish and American colonizers only succeeded in gaining a foothold in the traditional Muslim areas of Mindanao with the help of the Muslim rulers, the sultans and the datus.

As Muslims to this day still recognize the existence and leadership of this traditional elite, the rulers remain an influential and powerful group in the community. Some of them were appointed to public office by the US colonial government in the early years of the 20th century. When elections were introduced in Mindanao, the rulers were able to legitimize their traditional roles and increase their influence by accumulating wealth as a result of public office.

Politics in Muslim Mindanao today is dominated by the descendants of these royal clans who were able to adapt themselves to the political machinery of the modern Philippine state.

The Matalams, Pendatuns, Ampatuans, Piangs, Candaos, Masturas and the Sinsuats are some of the members of the Muslim royal houses who have managed to maintain their traditional power by going after the opportunities opened to them by elective positions.

Intermarriages between these clans have also strengthened their hold in almost all areas of Muslim Mindanao.

But clan members are also fierce competitors for power and their rivalries have sometimes degenerated into violence. In many instances, clans maintained private armies and used force to seize control of a political territory or to preserve their dominance.

Archetypal Muslim leader

The archetypal Muslim leader who successfully adapted the traditional ideas and symbols of his Maranao datu heritage into the setting of a modern political state is the recently deceased Lanao warlord Ali Dimaporo. Dimaporo's capacity for creating chaos and violence was legendary. His formidable political machine manipulated the electoral process so flagrantly that a popular saying that gained currency in the 1970s and 1980s was that "even the birds and the flowers" voted in Lanao del Sur.

In recent years, a secular Muslim elite of professionals, lawyers, doctors, teachers, social and political activists have emerged in Mindanao and many of them have been voted into office.

One of them is Zacarias Candao, a lawyer and political activist who is descended from a Maguindanao royal clan. Candao ran and became the first elected governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao which was created in 1990 and included Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Parouk Hussin, the incumbent ARMM governor who is running for a Senate seat in the ruling coalition, is a doctor of medicine and a former rebel. He was chair of the mainstream Moro insurgency, the Moro National Liberation Front, which signed a peace treaty with the government in 1996.

Agusan Sur, Agusan Norte

Politics in the two Agusan provinces has become synonymous with the Plaza family whose dominance of the undivided Agusan province survived the partition.

The Plazas' political ascendancy started when Democrito "D. O." Plaza Sr., a businessman engaged in timber exports, was appointed to the Butuan City Council in 1956.

In 1964, he ran and won as governor in what was still the undivided greater Agusan province. He held the post until the partition in 1967. In 1969, he became representative of the lone congressional district of Agusan del Sur, occupying the position until martial law was declared in 1972.

A known ally of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, Plaza Sr. served as an assemblyman in the Batasang Pambansa throughout the martial law years until the Edsa people power revolution in 1986.

Throughout his political rise, Plaza Sr. was building his business empire. The family owns a tree plantation in Agusan del Sur and sizeable real estate holdings in the province, including beach resorts and a network of logging, manufacturing and management companies.

In 1970, Plaza Sr. set up the Apo Cement in Cebu, with his siblings listed as incorporators.

But it was during the martial law years that the Plazas accumulated wealth, building a logging empire in Agusan.

Despite the ouster of Marcos in 1986, the Plazas continue to dominate politics in the two provinces.

From 1980 to 1986, Plaza Sr.'s wife, Valentina Galido, was governor of Agusan del Sur. She lost the governorship in the 1988 elections to Ceferino Paredes. She again held the post from 1998 to 2001.

In the 1987 elections, Plaza Sr. ran for Congress and won. In 1992, he again ran for governor. Shortly before he died in 1995, at age 74, Plaza Sr. was again elected to Congress.

Plaza Sr.'s three sons, Democrito "Boy Daku," Adolph Edward and Rodolfo are continuing the political dynasty.

"Boy Daku," who held the mayorship of Butuan City from 1992 to 1995, is running for the post which his wife, Daisy, the incumbent mayor, is relinquishing in her husband's favor.

Their son, Randolf, is seeking a council seat in Butuan City.

Adolph Edward is running for reelection as governor of Agusan del Sur. Rodolfo is also running for reelection as representative of the province's lone congressional district.

Figurado, Plaza Sr.'s brother, was mayor of Butuan City in Agusan del Norte from 1980 until 1986. His wife, Charito Booc, was a member of the House of Representatives from 1987 to 1998. She ran for senator and lost in 1998. She is attempting to regain her former congressional seat this year. She lost a congressional bid for the seat in 2001.

Her son Figurado Jr. is seeking a seat in the city council.

The Plazas' political rivals in Agusan del Norte are the Amantes.

Erlpe Amante, the eldest son of Rep. Edelmiro Amante, is running for the gubernatorial post being vacated by his sister, Angelica.

Angelica, who is completing three consecutive terms, is now running for a congressional seat.

Surigao del Norte

In Surigao del Norte, two sons of reelectionist Sen. Robert Barbers, Robert Ace and Robert Lyndon, are seeking fresh mandates.

BARBERS: Lording it over Surigao del Norte

Robert Ace is the province's incumbent representative while Robert Lyndon is the governor.

Surigao del Norte's first district, which includes Dinagat and Siargao islands, remains the fiefdom of the Ecleos.

Rep. Glenda Ecleo is running for reelection while her son, outgoing Dinagat Mayor Allan, is running for a seat in the provincial board.

Her daughter Gwendolyn is running for mayor of San Jose town, a stronghold of the family-led Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) religious cult.

The leader of the cult, Ecleo's son Ruben Ecleo who is in jail for the alleged murder of his wife, is a former mayor of San Jose.

Lanao del Norte

The political legacy of the late Ali Dimaporo who dominated the politics of the Lanao provinces for decades lives on in the second generation. His son, Abdullah Dimaporo, is seeking reelection to the second district that was passed on to him by his father.

Abdullah's wife, Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo, who has been governor of the province since 1998, is running for a third and last term.

Imelda also comes from a prominent Christian Lanao political clan. Her father, Arsenio, is a former governor of Lanao del Norte.

Misamis Occidental

Eleven of the 17 towns of Misamis Occidental are dominated by only a few families.

Rodolfo Luna, the three-term mayor of Don Victoriano town and a former logger, is running as vice mayor while his common-law wife, Anabel Hamoy, is seeking the mayoralty seat.

In Clarin, three-term Mayor Emeterio Roa, whose family owns considerable landholdings in the town, is sliding down to the vice-mayor post. His wife Glorife is running for reelection to the town council.

In Lopez Jaena town, Councilor Zenny Azcuna, who comes from a family of agri-entrepreneurs, is running for mayor. Her husband, three-term Mayor Melquiades Jr. is eyeing the vice-mayoralty post.

In Baliangao, Mayor Agne Yap of the prominent Villanueva clan, is seeking reelection while his wife Evita, is running for vice mayor. The Yap family owns vast tracts of land in Baliangao, Calamba and Sapang Dalaga towns.

In Calamba town, Agne Yap's cousin, Luisito Villanueva Jr., is running unopposed for mayor.

Another nephew of Agne Yap, Rey, is running for mayor of Sapang Dalaga town from his jail cell in the New Bilibid Prison.

Rey is teaming with his mother, incumbent town mayor Pacita Yap, who is sliding down to the vice-mayoralty post. Pacita, who was elected in 2001, is at large in connection with a murder case.

Rey's younger brother Reno Jr. is contesting the vice-mayoral post against his mother.

The Yaps have dominated Sapang Dalaga's politics since the town was created in 1971. Pacita's husband Reno Sr. served an uninterrupted term as mayor until 1986 when he was removed. His son, Rey, replaced him serving three terms until 1998. The Yaps lost control of the town with the defeat of Rey's wife, Rosalie Jean, in the 1998 elections.

In Panaon town, Mayor Merriam Paylaga is running for reelection while husband Francisco Jr. seeks a second term as vice governor.

In Bonifacio, former town mayor Samson Dumanjug, who finished three terms in 1995, is attempting a comeback as mayor, to replace his wife, second-termer Evelyn.

His daughter Charlotte D. Panal, former chair of the federated Sangguniang Kabataan, is seeking a seat in the municipal council. Samson's father was former mayor of Tambulig, Zamboanga del Sur, during martial law.

In Sinacaban, incumbent Mayor Cesaria Lood is seeking reelection while son Dello seeks another term as provincial board member. Her husband Eufracio, served as mayor until 1986. He ran again in 1988 and served until 1998. That year he ran for vice governor and won but died the following year.

In Aloran, banker Leonardo Regalado is running for reelection as mayor while his brother, Jimmy, a former mayor, is running for board member.

In Plaridel, Mayor Edilma Clarete Bulawin is seeking a fresh mandate along with her brother, Rep. Ernie Clarete. Bulawin succeeded Clarete as mayor when the latter's term expired in 1998, during which he sought and won the post of Misamis Occidental governor. In 2001, Clarete ran and won as representative. Clarete's wife Marina Paderanga Clarete is president of the Liga ng mga Barangay Provincial Federation.

In Ozamiz City, cousins Arnold Engracia Ricote and Irene Engracia Luansing Jr. are running alongside their aunt, Pedrita Rosauro, for city council seats. Cousin-in-law Reynaldo O. Parojinog Sr. is seeking a second term as mayor. Rosauro and Luansing are incumbent councilors.

Davao del Norte

Second district Rep. Antonio Floirendo Jr. is running for reelection. His uncle, incumbent Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario, a two-termer, is not seeking reelection. Del Rosario's son, Antonio, a provincial board member, is running for vice governor.

The Del Rosario-Floirendo clan owns the banana plantation, the Tagum Agricultural Dev't Corp. and the Davao City-based Nenita Farms, a meat processing and packaging company. Besides owning an interest in Tadeco and Nenita Farms, Governor Del Rosario owns realty and trucking businesses.

Davao del Sur

In Davao del Sur, former Gov. Rogelio Llanos filed his candidacy for another run at the gubernatorial post. He died last March and party mates tapped his widow, Fe, a former schoolteacher, to run in his stead.

When the three-term limit prevented Rogelio from running in 2001, he fielded his brother Reynerio to run. Reynerio died without completing his term.

Reynerio's daughter, Nonette, is running for a provincial board seat.

The Llanos patriarch, Nonito Sr., was the first governor of Davao del Sur when Davao was split into three provinces.

Fe Llanos' opponent in the gubernatorial race is incumbent Gov. Benjamin Joseph Bautista, whose brother Claude is seeking reelection as representative of the second district against their sister Lorna Bautista Bandigan.

The Bautistas are a landowning family. They own coconut, banana and cacao plantations in Malita, Santa Maria and other towns in the second district.

Rep. Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur's first district is seeking reelection. His wife, Mercedita, is seeking a provincial board seat. Cagas' nephew, Joseph, is a candidate for councilor of Digos City under reelectionist Mayor Arsenio Latasa's slate. Latasa's older brother, Simplicio, is running for reelection as a provincial board member.

Reelectionist board member Andres Montejo's daughter Givel Mamaril is running for mayor of Malalag town.

Compostela Valley

The Sarmientos, owners of the giant agribusiness concern Vitarich Corp., originally from Bulacan, started in politics in the 1950s when they set up logging companies in the still undivided Davao province, part of which became Compostela Valley. Members of the family have represented Bulacan and Davao in Congress.

No member of the Sarmiento family of Compostela Valley is running for public office this year.

Rogelio Sarmiento, who served as congressman for three terms until 2001, is caring for his ailing wife.

Rogelio ran for governor in 2001 but lost to Jose Caballero.

In the 1998 elections, Rogelio's mother Luz also ran but lost, again to Caballero.

Rogelio's late father, Lorenzo, served as congressman of the undivided Davao province in the early 1960s.

Rogelio's cousin, Angelito Sarmiento, is a three-termer congressman of Bulacan.

North Cotabato

In North Cotabato, Gov. Emmanuel Piñol is running for a third and last term and is up against former Magpet Mayor Rolando Pelonio.

Piñol's brother, Efren, is contesting the mayorship of Magpet against Pelonio's wife, Angelina.

Another brother, Supt. Pat Piñol, is running for mayor of Kidapawan City. Yet another brother Bernardo Jr. is seeking reelection as Kidapawan City councilor.

The fifth Piñol, M'lang town Vice Mayor Lito Piñol, now wants to become the town mayor.

Sultan Kudarat

Sultan Kudarat Gov. Pakung Mangudadatu, a member of the Maguindanao royal house, is running for reelection while his son, Lutayan town Mayor Suharto Mangudadatu, is aiming for Congress.

Maguindanao

The sultans of Maguindanao were the unchallenged power from the end of the 16th century until the 19th century in the valley of the Pulangi River, or the Rio Grande de Cotabato.

That has hardly changed. Most candidates for election in Maguindanao this year are descendants of the royal families.

In Maguindanao, Bai Sandra Sema, wife of Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, is eyeing the first district congressional seat of Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, who is on his last term. But Dilangalen has anointed his wife, Bai Sendig, to succeed him. Dilangalen is running for senator.

Bai Sendig's opponent is Bai Sendra Sema whose husband, Muslimin, is seeking reelection as mayor of Cotabato City.

Gov. Andal "Datu" Ampatuan is seeking another term. His sons Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr. of Datu Unsay town and Mayor Zaldy Ampatuan of Shariff Aguak are also up for reelection. The two towns were created in 2001.

Akmad, another son, is mayor of the newly created Mamasapano town.

Datu Ampatuan served a full term as mayor of Maganoy town, the former name of Shariff Aguak.

Another of his sons, Datu Saudi, was mayor of Datu Piang town from 1995 to 2003, when he was killed in a grenade blast.

Former Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong, a nephew of Datu Ampatuan, is running as congressman for the second district. Datumanong's son, Tasmi, is running for a seat in the provincial board.

Zamboanga provinces

In Zamboanga del Sur, Antonio Cerilles, second district representative from 1987 to 1998, is attempting to regain his former post. His wife, incumbent Gov. Aurora Cerilles, is running for reelection.

Cerilles' father, Vicente, was governor of Zamboanga del Sur during martial law.

First district Rep. Isidoro Real Jr. is running for reelection. He was the province's governor from 1992 to 2001. A son, Isidoro Real III, a provincial board member, died in 2002. Real III's sister, Maria Theresa Real-Cipriano, who was appointed as his replacement, is running for reelection.

In Zamboanga del Norte's first district, Rep. Cecilia Jalosjos-Carreon is seeking reelection. Her husband, Dapitan City Mayor Rodolfo Carreon Jr., is also a reelectionist.

Cecilia succeeded to the seat held by her brother, jailed former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos.

Gov. Isagani Amatong is running for reelection. His brother Prospero is the second district representative of Compostela Valley, who is also seeking reelection. The governor owns a school, a radio station, a newspaper and a security agency.

In Zamboanga Sibugay, Gov. George Hofer is seeking reelection. His son, Jethro, is running for Congress in the province's lone district. His wife, Dulce, was mayor of Titay town until 2001. The Hofers are owners of agricultural enterprises.

Sulu

In Sulu, none of the elected offices are being held or contested by descendants of the royal clans. Suod Tan is seeking to regain his former post of mayor of Jolo. He completed three terms as mayor in 2001. Suod's son, Edser, is running for board member, while his grandsons, Abdusakur and Nabil, are running for governor and congressman, respectively.

Abdusakur is a former governor of Sulu. Nabil was ARMM vice governor from 1993 to 1997. The Tans are descendants of original Chinese settlers in the province.

Bukidnon

In Bukidnon. Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri is running for reelection. His son third district Rep. Juan Miguel is also up for reelection. The governor held the third district legislative seat from 1987 to 1998. Zubiri's nephew, Ignacio, a Malaybalay councilor, is running for vice mayor.

In his 2002 statement of assets and liabilities, the governor listed no business interests but the people of Bukidnon know the family to be the owners of vast sugar plantations.

Camiguin

Gov. Pedro Romualdo is running for reelection. Son Jurdin is running for a third term as representative of the province's lone congressional district which his father held from 1987 to 1998. Another son, Noordin, is a reelectionist mayor of Mambajao. The governor's wife, Araceli, is a former mayor of Mambajao.

Sarangani

In Sarangani province, Rep. Erwin Chiongbian is seeking another term while his daughter Mary Bridget Chiongbian-Huang is running for vice governor.

The Chiongbians own agricultural plantations and shipping companies. *Reports from Franklin M. Caliguid, Ryan D. Rosauro, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Grace Cantal-Albasin, Nash B. Maulana, Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeffrey M. Tupas and Aisha A. Echavez, Ryan D. Rosauro and Noralyn Mustafa, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GMA hands over ₱5M in cash to Abu informant

From page A1

February 2003 of Mujib Susukan, a senior leader in the Abu Sayyaf terror group believed to have links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

The informant, who received bundles of P1,000 bills from Ms Macapagal as reward, had tipped off security forces about the location of Susukan where he was shot dead in a gun battle that claimed nine other lives.

She also awarded a medal to Col. Noel Buan, the head of army troops who killed another Abu Sayyaf leader, Hamsiraji Sali, and other rebels on April 8.

Susukan took part in numerous abductions and killings, including the kidnapping of 21 foreigners and Filipinos from resorts in Sipadan, Malaysia, in April 2004. Most of the captives were freed only after huge ransom payments were made. *AFP*

Corrections

THE FOLLOWING corrections should have gone into yesterday's segment of the "Nation of Clans" special report:

In the Negros Occidental section, the family that has carved out a political sphere of influence in the south are the *Alvarezes*, not the *Suarezes*.

Neil Tupas Jr. is running for board member, not congressman for the fifth district of Iloilo. It is Rep. Rolex Suplico, the nephew of Gov. Neil Tupas Sr., who is running for reelection as fifth district representative.

Oscar Garin Sr. is finishing a fresh first term, not last term, as first district congressman. He is running for governor instead of seeking reelection.

In the Eastern Visayas section, Larrazabal was unseated after serving for only two *years*, not *terms*.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Militants, police clash in Thailand; 112 killed

PATTANI, Thailand—Police gunned down scores of machete-wielding militants who stormed more than a dozen security outposts Wednesday, the bloodiest day yet in Thailand's troubled Muslim-dominated south. The death toll stood at least 112.

Only five security force personnel were killed. The rest were insurgents, mostly teenagers.

The eight hours of mayhem ended when police fired tear gas and bullets into a mosque, killing 34 militants who were holed up inside.

Television news reports showed the bodies of suspected Islamic fighters lying in pools of blood, some of them in front of police stations clasping machetes and wearing colored shirts and camouflage pants.

Gunfire echoed as armored personnel carriers cruised deserted village streets and commandos moved through forest. Policemen and soldiers, carrying automatic rifles, crouched as they ran across roads and ditches.

No group claimed responsibility for the highly coordinated assault by possibly hundreds of young militants, although past violence has been blamed on separatists seeking to carve a homeland in the Muslim-majority south of this predominantly Buddhist country.

The death count was dramatically lopsided.

Army chief Gen. Chaiyasith Shinawatra told reporters that 107 insurgent were killed and 17 were arrested. He said, three policemen and two soldiers were also killed while 15 policemen were wounded.

Soldiers and police—tipped off in advance—were waiting for the poorly armed assailants. Some had guns but most carried only machetes, said Lt. Gen. Proong Bunphandung, the chief of police for the south.

"The security officers have been patiently working with local people and gathering intelligence. We waited for the right time to achieve this success," he said.

Many parts of the region have been under martial law for months. Security was tightened along the border with neighboring Malaysia, which has in the past denied allegations of harboring militants.

The violence erupted at 5 a.m. when the insurgents attacked more than 15 police bases, village defense posts and district offices in Yala, Pattani and Songkhla provinces in a bid to steal weapons. *AP*

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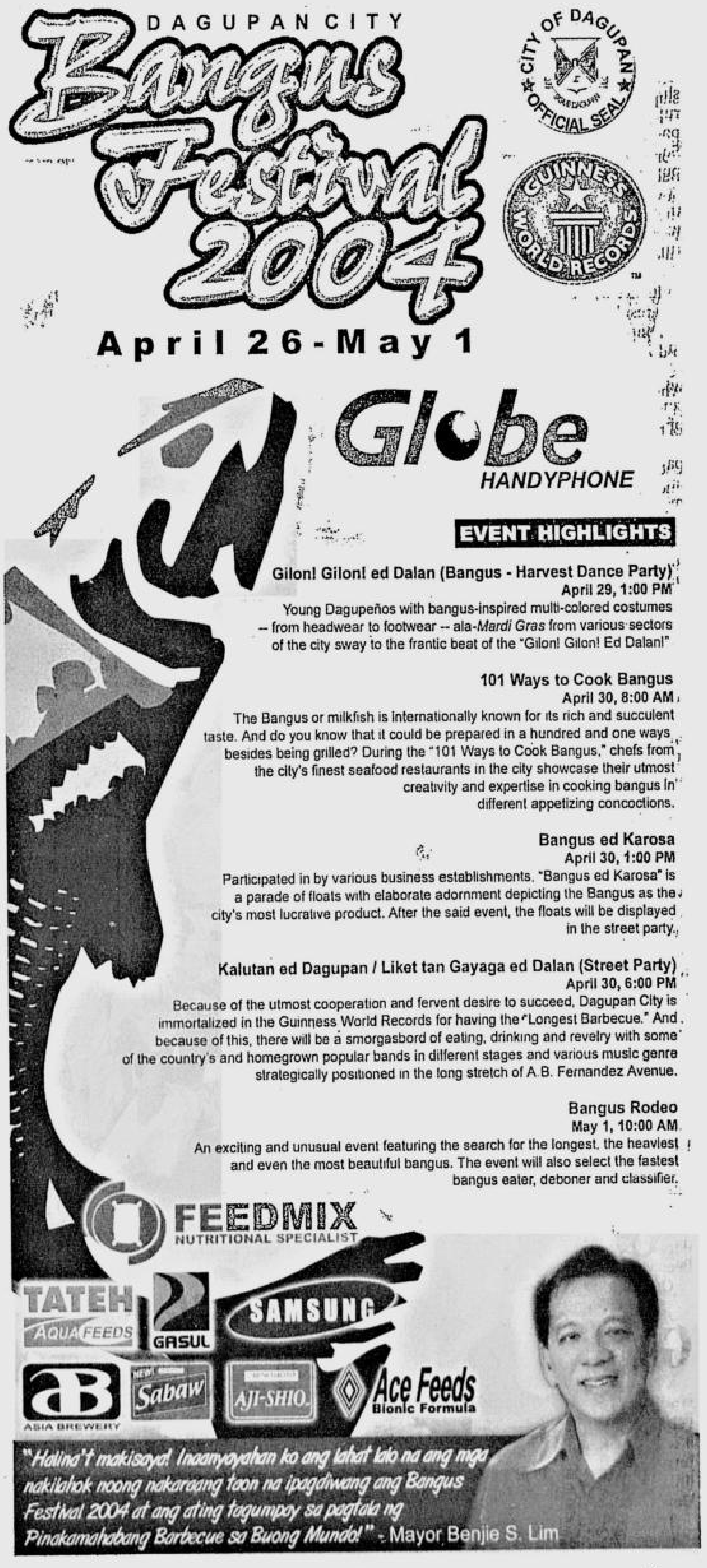

DAGUPAN CITY
Bangus Festival 2004
April 26 - May 1

Globe HANDYPHONE

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An exciting and unusual event featuring the search for the longest, the heaviest and even the most beautiful bangus. The event will also select the fastest bangus eater, deboner and classifier.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Militants, police clash in Thailand; 112 killed

PATTANI, Thailand—Police gunned down scores of machete-wielding militants who stormed more than a dozen security outposts Wednesday, the bloodiest day yet in Thailand's troubled Muslim-dominated south. The death toll stood at least 112.

Only five security force personnel were killed. The rest were insurgents, mostly teenagers.

The eight hours of mayhem ended when police fired tear gas and bullets into a mosque, killing 34 militants who were holed up inside.

Television news reports showed the bodies of suspected Islamic fighters lying in pools of blood, some of them in front of police stations clasping machetes and wearing colored shirts and camouflage pants.

Gunfire echoed as armored personnel carriers cruised deserted village streets and commandos moved through forest. Policemen and soldiers, carrying automatic rifles, crouched as they ran across roads and ditches.

No group claimed responsibility for the highly coordinated assault by possibly hundreds of young militants, although past violence has been blamed on separatists seeking to carve a homeland in the Muslim-majority south of this predominantly Buddhist country.

The death count was dramatically lopsided.

Army chief Gen. Chaiyasith Shinawatra told reporters that 107 insurgent were killed and 17 were arrested. He said, three policemen and two soldiers were also killed while 15 policemen were wounded.

Soldiers and police—tipped off in advance—were waiting for the poorly armed assailants. Some had guns but most carried only machetes, said Lt. Gen. Proong Bunphandung, the chief of police for the south.

"The security officers have been patiently working with local people and gathering intelligence. We waited for the right time to achieve this success," he said.

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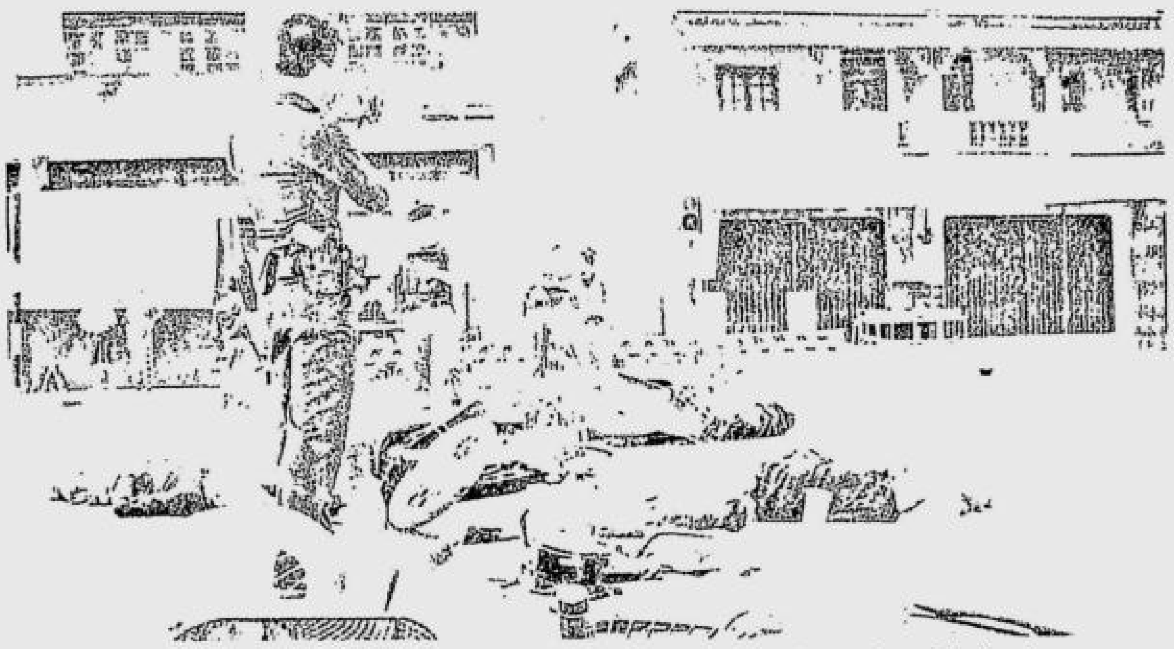
The violence erupted at 5 a.m. when the insurgents attacked more than 15 police bases, village defense posts and district offices in Yala, Pattani and Songkhla provinces in a bid to steal weapons. *AP*



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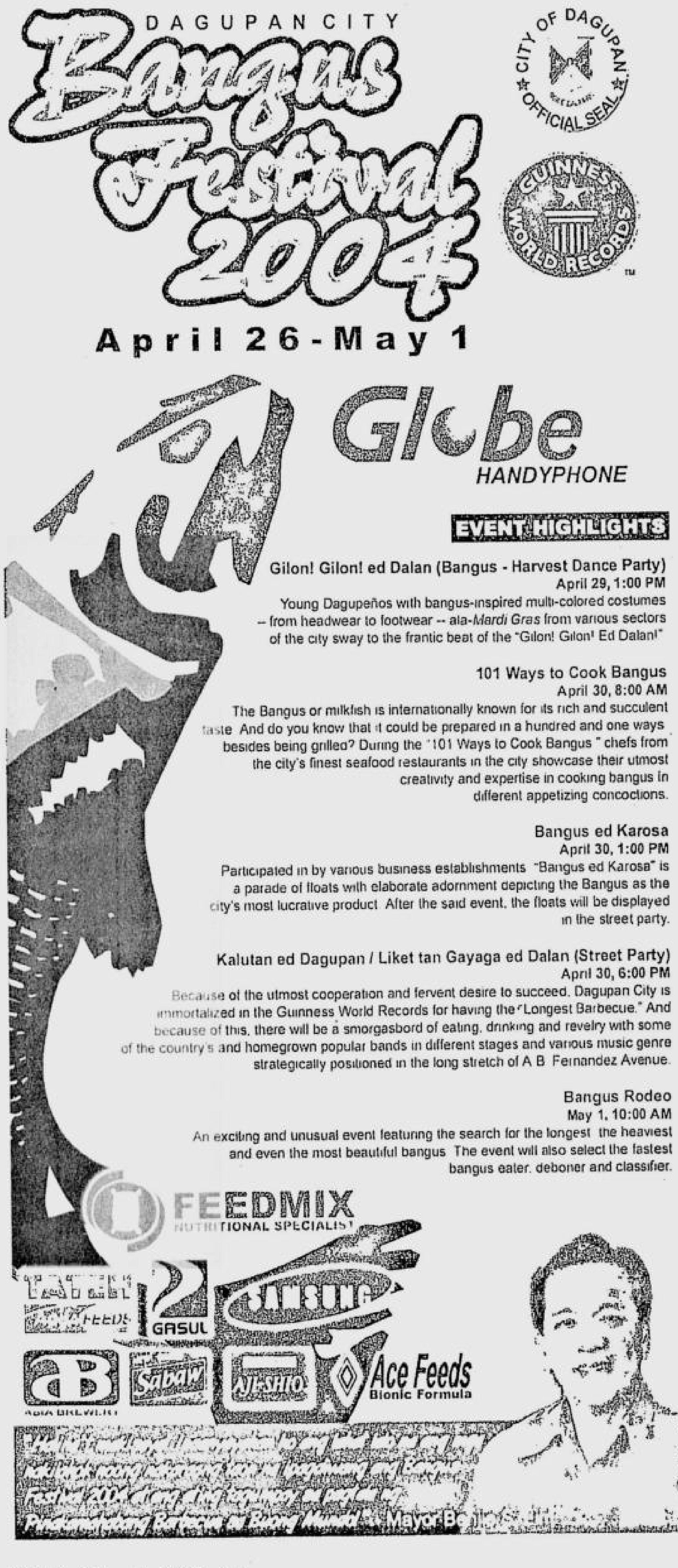

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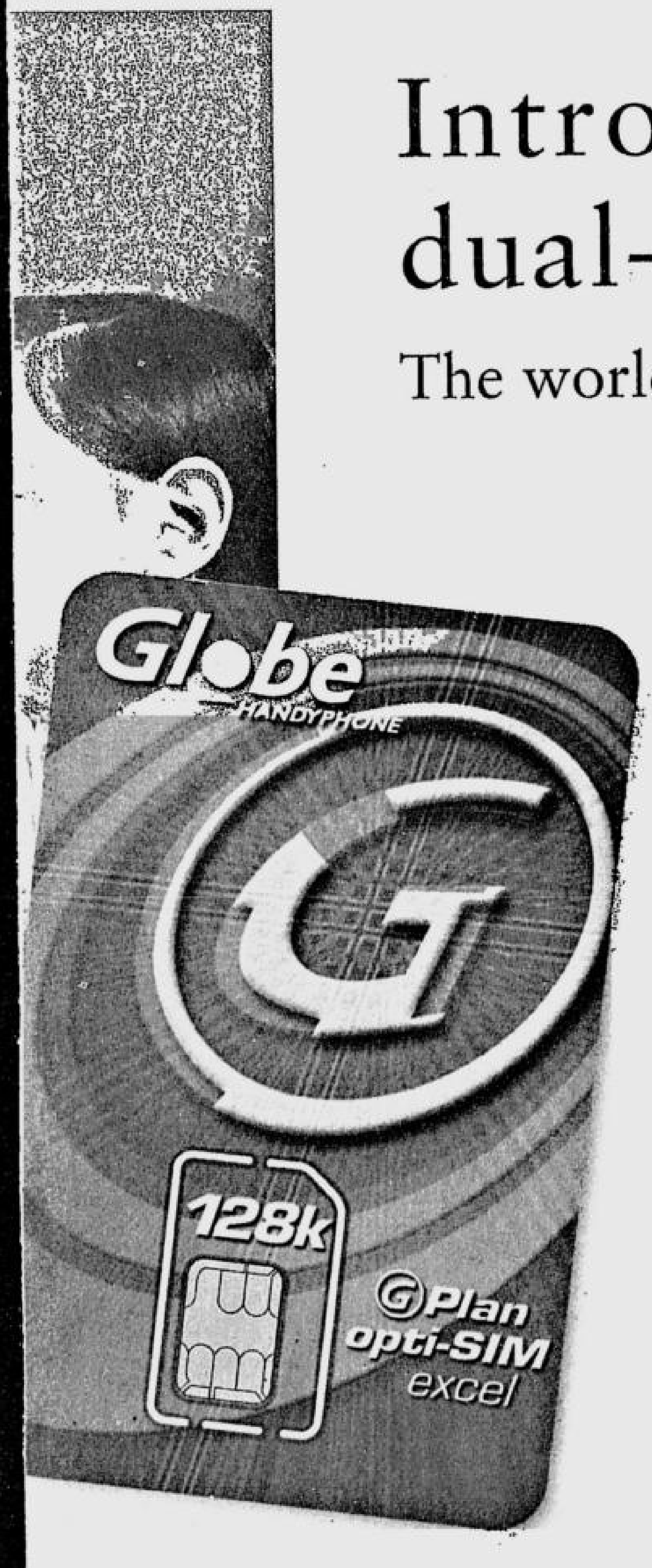

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EDITORIALS

Informed choice

THAT the poor do not give much thought to surveys—a conclusion gleaned from a recent study conducted by the Ateneo de Manila University's Institute of Philippine Culture—ought to give the presidential contenders pause as the days leading to the elections dwindle down to a precious few. That the poor view surveys with distrust ought to wrench the fevered public attention from the poll figures as to who are leading or trailing in the race, and move the contenders to rethink their respective stances. Yes, rethink that stance, whether euphoric or sullen, and come to terms with an idea otherwise simple but which, in this neck of the woods, comes imbued with provocative dimensions: that the poor will exercise choice and vote regardless of the trend.

This conclusion runs counter to the notion bolstered primarily by the surveys that it's all over but the shouting. (The latest poll of NFO Trends showing President Macapagal-Arroyo decisively pulling away from Fernando Poe Jr.—36.9 percent to 26.4 percent—had the administration candidate blithely announcing: "It looks like we will win." But then the candidate who likes to call herself the mother of the nation has come up with other equally inelegant pronouncements, including her reminder to soldiers not to forget that it was she who had increased their salaries.) It belies the perception that the impoverished sector has been rendered unthinking by the exigencies of need. It suggests that poor voters recognize and will use the capability to overhaul a state of affairs that has kept them in chains.

This is actually the ideal: an empowered citizenry who will elect their national and local leaders, not according to the dynamics of a herd, as conservative analysts predict, but on the basis of an informed choice. Who will choose, not according to the tyranny of survey statistics, but on the strength of the candidates' qualifications and track record. Imagine the results if such a way of thinking displayed by the underclass in the study is found to also prevail in the upper (that is to say, educated) classes. Imagine what will happen if these measures were applied to all candidates seeking election and the huge "undecided" bloc snaps into action. (Unthinkable in these times when even the minions of the Marcos dictatorship think nothing of challenging collective memory, but hope springs eternal.)

Scientific tool

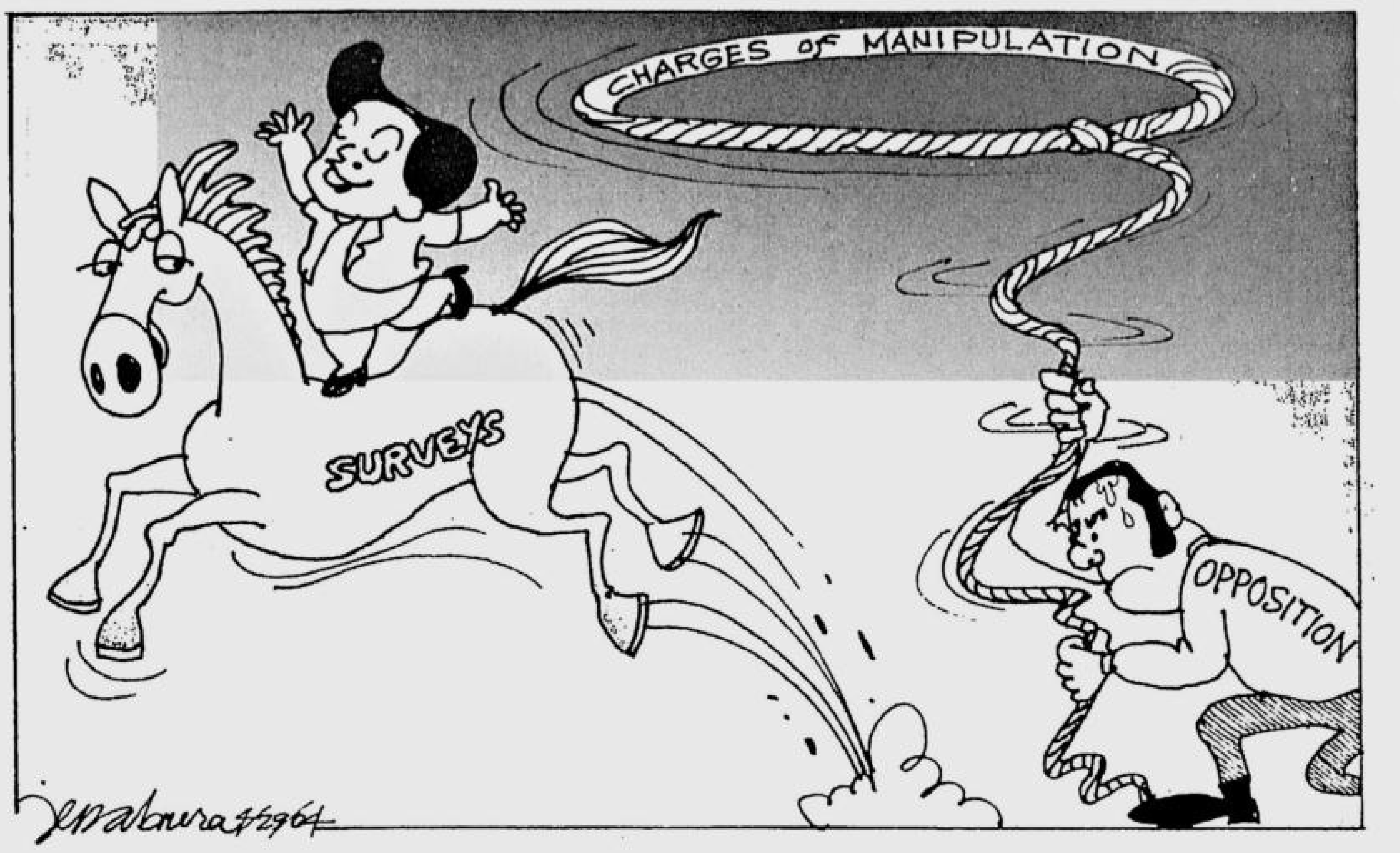
CERTAIN contenders lamenting their sliding ratings have been attacking surveys as an instrument of manipulation by the "winning" candidates. In so doing, they have laid themselves open to the question of whether they would take on such a dismissive attitude if the situation were reversed and they were not the cellar-dwellers.

Academics and number-crunchers have been quick to defend the survey as a scientific tool that, if conducted according to the prescribed method, effectively measures public opinion (for example, the American people's strong support of US President George W. Bush when he announced his decision to invade Iraq, and his steep plunge in their estimation with the continuing US-led occupation failing to yield weapons of mass destruction and with US soldiers coming home in boxes). Those trained in survey-taking are taking pains to explain methodology, sampling and margin of error—admittedly a positive development, given that these have heretofore been arcane terms to a large segment of the public.

But the ruminative observer would note that in the scheme of things, a scientific enterprise cannot wholly be an exercise in objectivity (consider the creation of the nuclear bomb, now the ultimate instrument of power). The phrasing of the questions, the expertise or awkwardness of the field interviewer, indeed, the particular mood of the respondent at the time of the interview, are factors that can substantially affect the results. (Remember the Marcos referendums in the bad old days of martial law.)

The dissemination of survey results—an exercise that requires stringent care—may also serve the cause of disinformation.

Context is the thing. It does not help matters any that survey-taking is an enterprise that involves tremendous capital. In these parts where "dirty tricks" are known to do wonders and *dagdag-bawas* has been refined to sophistication, suspicious observers are well within their rights to ask: Does objectivity fly out the window when money makes it through the door?



Straw votes in the wind

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

A BITTERLY-CONTESTED election triggers an epidemic of straw votes. People cast about for indicators as to where the wind blows.

The straw-vote "bug" bit editors attending a Philippine Press Institute meeting who "voted." A Solita Monsod, Felipe Miranda or Mahar Mangahas could rightly scoff that the process wouldn't pass scientific muster. Indeed, the PPI straw vote was merely the "gut-reactions" of hard-nosed journalists who track, in areas where their papers circulate, where the wind blows.

Here's how candidates fared in "editors' preferences": President Macapagal-Arroyo topped, followed by Panfilo Lacson (until now, a fourth placer). Fernando Poe Jr. slid to third. Eddie Villanueva dislodged Raul Roco and, at tail-end, came Eddie Gil.

"Eddie Gil?" an incredulous publisher asked.

"Relax," responded another. "That's a none-of-the-above opinion."

Despite those yellow ribbons, the well-qualified Roco's unforeseen illness is taking a toll. FPJ's patent inexperience seeps through, despite his sustained ducking of national issues.

A more telling indicator, editors say, is the "ATM ballot." Well before election day, contributors cast their votes with cash. Hence, the FPJ team's candid gripes that campaign contributions have only trickled in is significant.

This is a country, after all, where many "leaders" work by the Golden Rule: "He who has the gold rules." A martial law "Rolex 12 orig," like Juan Ponce Enrile, has a lavishly funded campaign.

See these "straws-in-the-wind" in the context of the Ateneo University's new study, "The Vote of the Poor." The report of the Institute on Philippine Culture presents insights that question assumptions underpinning this campaign, a reminder of G.K. Chesterton's counsel: To see the truth, stand on your head.

Many candidates sing or dance the "ocho-ocho" on rally platforms. Tito Sotto, Jinggoy and Dolphy swear that's all the *masa* expect.

"Contrary to common belief... the poor ranked education, experience, platform and track record as among the most important criteria for choosing candidates," the IPC found. "They do not necessarily have high regard for the wealthy and powerful. What they do have are idealistic notions of leadership, valuing qualities such as piety (*makadiyos*), helpfulness, sincerity and responsibility."

"Poor people take the vote seriously," the study adds. "While they are drawn to the fiesta atmosphere... they also see the process as legitimate and consider their participation as an opportunity to bring about change."

That conclusion, in fact, recalls the 1999 World Bank's report, "Voices of the Poor." In 60 countries, researchers probed just what the "*masa*" felt.

"A first finding, which differentiates poor people from rich people, is lack of voice," the World Bank's James Wolfensohn noted in the 13th annual Andersen Lecture. "The first thing they talk about is not lack of money. It is inability to convey to people in authority what they think."

In 1998 Philippines, the great majority (91.1 percent) of the so-called "dirt-poor" voters ("D" and "E" classes) voted for Joseph Estrada. He was, they hoped, to be their voice in the highest post in government.

But Erap didn't do the presidency's gruelling work. Voices of the poor were drowned out by the Atong Angs, Jaime Dichaveses and Mark Jimenezes in boozy midnight Palace carousing. Decision-making moved from the executive office to the Palace bar—perhaps, second in influence only to presidential harems.

The World Bank report found that "the poor don't trust governments... not even all NGOs," Wolfensohn adds. They want freedom to speak freely, gain access, elect their own people.

In the IPC study, the poor are wary about those with superior education (and) distrust surveys. They have few illusions and know elections involve fraud.

Yet, they see elections as "the only legitimate means to choose leaders." So, they vote in "their numbers."

Thus, attempts to overthrow the government, whether by the New People's Army or rebellious army officers, are unlikely to send the poor boiling into the streets.

It "partly explains why 'people power' uprisings were mainly middle-class events," the Ateneo study notes. They "saw only little participation from poorer social sectors."

Today's flawed electoral system confronts "the citizen with a paucity of choices."

"Kingmakers" Erap and Edgardo Angara wedged a grossly inadequate Fernando Poe Jr. as presidential candidate. Thus, voters' choice is straight-jacketed into choosing between Barrabas and Barrabas.

"Raising the quality of Philippine elections does not have to wait until Filipinos are lifted from poverty," the IPC study asserts. "Electoral and political reforms appear to be the key to improving the country's political and economic life."

If President Macapagal-Arroyo is reelected, as Malacañang predicts, she could start, one editor suggested, by making the First Gentleman permanently invisible and impotent—politically, that is.

More 'sacrifices'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE sent me this e-mail. Unfortunately, I lost the author's name after I cut and pasted and deleted his letter. The last I do routinely because my e-mail space easily gets overrun and readers have been complaining all the time of their letters bouncing back. If the author reads this, I beg him to write me a note and I will make the proper attribution next time. For the nonce, I'm afraid he will have to remain anonymous. His letter goes:

"There is in fact a whole group that is coming home for the same reasons Barry Gutierrez (Sacrifices, April 21) expounded on in his letter. I hope this gives Mr. De Quiros reason to have a bottle or two of beer and feel a bit better about the youth while he writes his next column.

"Araceli Habaradas is an Ateneo lawyer who was once connected with the Ateneo Human Rights Center. She will be earning her Master of Laws degree (Human Rights-Women's Rights) at Columbia this May.

"Prof. Mario Victor Leonen, Barry's colleague at the UP College of Law Faculty, will also be earning his LL.M. from Columbia on May 18-19, 2004. Marvic is not even attending our graduation ceremonies anymore. He is flying home after the final examinations which begin next week.

"John Virgino used to work for a senator. He is at the American University Law School in Washington, D.C. He, too, is graduating this May. He says he is a cluster of initials older, perhaps more charming, perhaps more hobbled by an expectation that things will be better. He's going to hop back home this year in any case. Happily.

"Virgilio delos Reyes is a research fellow in international trade and human rights at the University of Minnesota Law School. He used to work at the Department of Agriculture. He's going home.

"There are probably tens of others more who are going home after earning their degrees, not a tad regretful about the thought of doing just that.

"Part of the reason why people wonder what on earth is wrong when a Filipino lawyer decides to return to the Philippines after getting a post-graduate degree is the fact that a Filipino law graduate may take the New York bar (and the bar exam of several other states, including California) without attending law school here. Doctors have to get some medical training or take an exam to take the state board. We don't have that baggage. So people think it is foolish for us to return when our European, Latin American, South Asian and East Asian counterparts are moving heaven and earth to finish the LL.M. and learn better English just to meet the requirements for taking the bar. I mention this not to set lawyers apart; I mention it only because some people perceive us none the wiser by deciding to return when we could very well be staying while not having to go through all the credential contests at the New York Bar Examiners' office.

"Will five or six graduate students deciding to come home change the way people think of us being either fools or idiots? Perhaps not. If at all, and as Barry tried to put it, this opportunity to experience the Philippines from the outside and see how it is in this supposed land of milk and honey, gave us the one reason in the world to go back: we don't belong here. Nor will we ever. There are other reasons. Most of these reasons are there simply because we are Filipinos and not because we want to be heroes. We're simply ending this sojourn because there is so much to come home to in the Philippines.

"I believe there is something providential in the mere act of returning. It is that feeling you have when you are away from home and you cannot wait to return. You just go home. You're happy you have the chance to do just that. You never ask why."

It does warm the cockles of the heart and offers a powerful incentive to repair to the nearest bar and risk the gout-inducing properties of a bottle of beer or two. Five or six Filipino graduates in US universities coming home may not change the way people think of them as fools or idiots, but it will most definitely change the way this country thinks about right and wrong, what is impossible and what is not.

What their collective homecoming does say is that it can be done. People who are brilliant and talented can study in the United States and having done so come back to this country and do some good here. People who are brilliant and talented can live up to their brilliance and talent by refusing to pursue fool's gold in the form of having a better car or larger house than their neighbors and opt to live the life of the mind. People in other countries do it routinely. China is chief of them, their graduates in the United States coming home to manage their gigantic factories sporting jeans, T-shirts and cellular phones. But that's another story.

Lawyers are particularly careful about one thing because of its impact on the state of things. That is setting a precedent. They will go to great lengths to stop a judge or justice from ruling in favor of a defendant who is facing charges of torture or summary execution because it stands to wreak havoc on human rights. Or from the other side, they will go to great lengths to get a judge or justice to rule in favor of a victim of sexual abuse because it stands to embolden other victims to report similar cases of harassment.

A ruling like that sets a precedent, one that can be cited by other lawyers and judges to argue a cause, one that can encourage others to follow. It is the blazed trail, the cleared path that sends the wagons rolling. It is the leak in the dike, the small opening that sends the floodwaters bursting through. That is what Gutierrez and the others are doing: they are setting a precedent.

You never know where it might lead to.

Reconfiguration in the Senate?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OUR colleague Rina Jimenez-David wrote recently of a smoldering movement among some voters to boycott senatorial candidates who are heavily identified with the discredited regime of Joseph Estrada. The boycott movement answers to the acronym "SEEMMOT" for: Santiago, Enrile, Estrada, Madrigal, Maceda, Osmeña and Tatad. The "SEEMMOT" movement could conceivably reconfigure the shape of the incoming Senate. What could happen is that those candidates in the "twilight zone" just below the Magic 12, such as K-4 candidates Richard Gordon, Robert Barbers and Rodolfo Biazon, as well as independent candidates like Heherson Alvarez, who was unjustly rejected by the K-4 coalition in favor of Miriam Santiago, and Francisco Chavez, would receive a big boost.

* * *

We hopped to Leyte for a quick look at the political situation and found that the fight for the governorship pits two established Leyte political families that have been alternately allies and opponents in their long political history. One candidate is the elderly former three-term Rep. Sergio Apostol, who was a lead prosecutor in the impeachment trial of Estrada in the Senate and became chair and CEO of the PNOC's largest subsidiary, the Energy Development Corp. Apostol is helped by his wife, reelectionist Rep. Trinidad Apostol of the second district. Pitted against him is a young and highly successful computer specialist and Ateneo professor, Jericho L. Petilla, son of the outgoing three-term governor, Remedios "Matin" Loreto-Petilla and former two-term Gov. Leopoldo Petilla.

The Petillas, whose family has been running undefeated in local elections in Leyte since 1988, persuaded their technocrat son to momentarily leave his computer corporation that employs 2,000 people and continue the political tradition. From indications Jericho, a personable fellow in his early 40s, is enjoying the campaign, spicing his speeches with some folk singing. His pretty wife Ann, is campaigning very hard, says Polding Petilla with a grin, "because she wants to be first lady of Leyte." Queried on how his son's opponent is doing, Polding said with characteristic humor, "Serging is leading—in Samar."

* * *

Gov. Matin Petilla is running for the House in the first district of Leyte, not the fifth district where the Loretos come from, because her own sister, Carmen L. Cari, is running there against their own brother, former Rep. Berting Loreto.

As one can see, politics is very much a family affair in this country. Matin, who won the largest plurality in the gubernatorial contest in Leyte, is running against former Ninoy Aquino associate Charlie Avila but spends part of her time campaigning for Jericho. As in many parts of the country, the Apostols and the Petillas are bitterly battling each other at the local level, but on the national level they are both for GMA.

* * *

From Leyte we crossed to Samar via the San Juanico Bridge and we found there a second return bout. The protagonists are Rep. Eduardo Antonio Nachura, a former law professor who distinguished himself in the House as chair of the committee on electoral reforms and constitutional amendments and is a lead supporter of Speaker Jose de Venecia in Charter change via the constituent assembly, and former Rep. Catalino Figueroa. They first fought in 1998 when JDV ran against Joseph Estrada. Figueroa, who was closely identified with JDV, was handily trounced by Nachura on the issue of corruption (Figueroa built a beautiful mansion jutting out into the sea which became a big scandal in the province). They fought again in 2001 where Nachura won anew. I hope the Samareños would return Nachura for his third term as he is truly someone they can be proud of.

* * *

In Eastern Samar two friends of ours are running in a three-cornered gubernatorial fight: former media colleague DOTC Undersecretary Ben Evardone and my husband's former Army division commander and one-time governor, retired Lt. Gen. Ruperto Ambil, are both challenging Gov. Tending Salazar of K-4. Evardone is with the KNP while Ambil is supporting Lacson. An interesting sidelight is that the mother of TV talk show host Boy Abunda, Licerna "Lesing" Abunda, a three-term councilor in Borongan, Eastern Samar's capital, is running for vice mayor.

* * *

As in Leyte, GMA is being carried by various political factions in Nueva Ecija even as they fight one another at the local level. For instance, the NPC-Balane party of reelectionist Gov. Tomas Joson is battling former Rep. Julita Lorenzo-Villareal, wife of incumbent Rep. Raul Villareal, of the Lakas-Kampi for the governorship of Nueva Ecija, but they're both carrying GMA. In fact, says San Isidro Mayor Sonia Lorenzo, Governor Joson has been cracking the whip on his party mates in NPC-Balane to deliver big for GMA.

Mayor Lorenzo herself is locked in a bitter fight with her Lakas-CMD opponent Nestor Magno, who succeeded in ousting her as mayor two months before the campaign period began, with the complicity of the Comelec, as well as a third candidate, her husband's nephew, Christopher Villareal, son of Julita.

Mayor Lorenzo, a chemical engineer, is running for her third term on the issue of performance. Judged "Most Outstanding Mayor" last September by the provincial government, she has installed a water system for San Isidro with a Land Bank loan of P28 million. But wisely she and the municipal board decided to lease its operation for 15 years to the Filipino partner of the German contractor for a P2.4 million rental a year. The rental pays for the loan amortization while the town learns to manage the water system when the latter finally reverts to it after 15 years. Lorenzo's program for San Isidro's farmers, which includes housing under the Pag-IBIG program, is being replicated by the Asian Development Bank nationwide. Surveys indicate that Lorenzo leads her opponents by a mile, which shows that nothing speaks better than the politics of performance.

The metaphors and vote of the poor (1)

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THE INSCRUTABLE poor masses out there have been publicized, lionized, satirized, analyzed and wooed to death. Election time has a way of smoking them out of the woodwork, the cracks and crevices where they dwell, as if candidates realize they exist for the first time. Suddenly the poor are on everyone's minds and lips, suddenly they rule, they poll.

Do the poor produce a "dumb *masa*" vote? What do the poor think of elections? How do they make their choices? How much influence do the media exert on them? What to them are the traits of a true leader?

The poor are smarter than you think.

The Ateneo University's Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) released a few days ago its findings on how the poor view elections and choose their candidates. What, how exactly do they think?

"The Vote of the Poor: The Values and Pragmatics of Elections" was the result of a research using focused group discussions (FGD) as a tool to get to the raw sentiments and perceptions of the subjects. Unlike surveys that use statistical methods, the FGD type elicits qualitative responses and scrutinizes the meaning and quality of these responses. In clinical psychology, it is called the phenomenological way.

The FGDs were held in Metro Manila, Baguio, Cebu, Zamboanga, Camarines Sur, Iloilo and Davao del Sur. Six groups were all-male and five were all-female (aged 30 and above). Another five groups were composed of mostly young males and females under 30 years old.

The IPC did a qualitative analyses of the statements that came from the FGDs, but I'm sure readers would like to know what exactly were said. Nothing beats a good quote.

When groups were asked to supply metaphors about leaders, the responses suggested guidance, stability, service and perspective. A sampling:

Dalan na dapat matanos na lakawan kan pamilya. Ilaw na nagbibigay ng liwanag. Kapitan sa barko, madala sa mga tawo sa ilang destinasyon. Ama na gumagabay sa anak. Ama na dapat mamuno at aktibo sa lahat ng gawain. Magulang na nagtuturo ng mabuti. Sasakyan na kayang lusutan ang lubak. Leon na hari ng kagubatan.

Education is regarded as important but also with considerable distrust because the highly educated have been the most corrupt. The poor would rather vote for the one with the traits of a good leader, especially the one with vision, innate intelligence and a heart for the poor.

Some responses: *Kapag mayroon kang tinapos igagalang ka ng tao.* College graduate *para alam ang batas.* Uneducated leaders tend to get influenced by advisers who know more about governance. *Kinahanglang aron dili matunto kung unsay dautan, dili matudluan, naay prinsipyo. May mga taong may pinggaralan pero hindi marunong magisip.* Educational qualification is not that important, what is important is that he/she is intelligent. *Mas maayo pa ang waay grado sa taas ug grado kay dili kabalo mangurakot.*

Attributes of good leaders: *Makadiyos/may takot sa Diyos, matulungin, matapat, responsable, matalino, masipag, tumutupad sa pangako, maprinsipyo, mapagkatiwalaan.*

Bad leaders: *Kurakot, sinungaling, sakim, iresponsable, makasarili, abusado, mabisyo, tamad.* (May I butt in? *Sana tamad mangurakot!*)

Educational achievement, the IPC found out, does not appear among the most-valued qualities. The rural-urban distinction provided a point of differentiation. *Makadiyos* (close to God), for instance, hardly matters among the rural poor participants. It is a trait mentioned by the urban poor participants, by both youth and non-youth groups. *Matalino* (intelligent) does not emerge as a valued trait among urban poor participants, but it is the most frequently mentioned trait among the rural poor.

Views on the elections: *Panagpabanglo ken panangpadakes. Pera at bigas na binibigay ng mga kandidato. Masisira na naman and relasyon ng mga tao. Halimbawa, magkaaway ang magkapatid. Maraming nabubuhay na patay* (flying voters). *Ilegal na transaksyon. Magpapabango. Sinasamantala ang panahon, naglalabas ng mga pondo para sa mga* projects. *Takutan. Dayaan na naman.*

Elections are widely viewed as a wooing game, a show, a gamble which involves risks, deception and trickery. Metaphors: *Parang laro na may nananalo at natatalo. Pareha ug sugal adunay makadaug, aduna usay mapilde. Isang magulo at maruming laro. Katulad ng baraha, may patay at buhay. Isang* chess game *na malalaman lang kung sino ang panalo sa huling tira. Isang karera ng kabayo na may siguradong mananalo. Parang ligawan na may sinasagot at naba-basted. Sarong bulaklak na namumukadkad, kadakol bubuyog na nag-aalimbubyong.*

Tulad ng isang basura na dapat linisin. Isang Orocan na plastik. Tulad ng radyo na maingay. A wedding with so much food and money. A beauty contest with candy showers. *Isang* fashion show *na ang mga pulitiko ay nagpapaganda ng anyo. Paguwapuhan, pasiklaban. Pareha ng Sinulog daghan kaayo ang mga tawo nga mudugok.*

According to the IPC, the poor approach elections with ambivalence. Still, they regard it as a legitimate means to effect change. Thus they say:

May kasabihan na ang hindi bumoto, walang karapatang magreklamo. Most will vote even if the people running for office do not merit (the people's) approval. *Dito nakasalalay ang kinabukasan ng mga mamamayan. Para mapaunlad ang bayan. Tsansa upang matanggal ang tiwaling lider. Para mailuklok ang mabuting kandidato. Para makakuha ng pera. Para manalo ang kandidato ko. Para kung sakaling naluklok siya at may problema ako, matutulungan niya ako.* Because a voter's affidavit allows one to go abroad. There are two kinds of voters: *ang uto-uto at ang nagpapauto.*

More next time.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Intimations of mortality

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

AS this is being written, Raul Roco has yet to arrive. I don't know whether he will bring glad or somber tidings about his health. Whatever the news, at least rumor will be replaced with facts.

One of Roco's most ardent supporters is my aunt, Nini Quezon-Avanceña. While I haven't had a chance to speak to her about her views concerning Roco's health, her continued support gave me pause for thought.

Of all people, my aunt (and my father, were he still alive) would know what it's like to have a politician saddled with ill health. I believe my aunt remembers her father as healthy and strong, but my father grew up with the ups and downs that inevitably accompanied his father's tuberculosis. Chronic illness didn't prevent their father from seeking office, or exercising the powers of the presidency, even when laid low by fevers and weakness.

In fact, their father turned his illness into an advocacy, mobilizing government support for the Santol Sanitorium (later the Quezon Institute), a cause my aunt has been involved in since she reached adulthood. My father observed that his father's tuberculosis did affect his father's temperament: TB was considered inevitably fatal, and a politician afflicted with it is susceptible to being obsessed with their posthumous fame. My father once advised me to study the life of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan, as an instructive parallel to the life of his father. Both men stubbornly clung to power and pushed forward the independence of their countries partly out of the desire to be the first independent president of their country.

Most politicians have a mystical belief in destiny. They realize that their moment comes only once; and that when that moment comes, they must seize it, regardless of their personal circumstances. Sometimes that moment comes when the politician's health has been ruined. Manuel Roxas, according to a doctor uncle, was widely viewed by doctors as virtually uninsurable when he ran for president in 1946. He had developed chronic heart disease as a prisoner of war and used his weak heart as an excuse to minimize his cooperation with the Japanese.

In contrast, Sergio Osmeña, though over a decade older than Roxas, was in the pink of health but increasingly deaf. The irony was that this fostered the belief (fanned by his political opponents) that he was senile and incapable of handling the problems of the country. What was important to Roxas' supporters was that Roxas was younger, more vigorous, and more aggressive. This perception was enough to elect him president. A further irony was that Osmeña ended up outliving Roxas by over a decade.

When Roxas died, Elpidio Quirino was at sea, recovering from a heart attack. His ill-fated reelection campaign against Ramon Magsaysay foundered in part because Quirino had to be confined at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Washington at the height of the campaign. This was a politically fatal situation in comparison to the younger and extremely vigorous Magsaysay, whose every leap over a ditch served to underline the difference in health between the incumbent and himself. And yet, Magsaysay, healthy as an ox, died in a plane crash before his 50th birthday and the end of his first term.

There is nothing wrong with electing a person with an ailment. It is preferable that the voters know of the ailment, but an argument can be made for keeping it secret if it won't affect the leader's judgment or abilities. Or if there is a commitment on the part of the leader to relinquish power should his health prove detrimental to the public good.

Unfortunately, human nature and power being what they are, rules must be in place to make sure that hard-headed leaders don't insist on clinging to power when their health gets in the way of responsibly wielding power. That is why our Constitution adopted similar provisions in the US Constitution that permits the cabinet to put the president on forced leave, so to speak, in the case of illness or mental or physical incapacity. The Americans were reacting to the case of Woodrow Wilson who suffered a stroke and clung on to power by being sequestered in the White House, leaving his wife to run the government.

In our case, there is the example of Ferdinand Marcos, who, as dictator, had no vice president to make acting president like Quezon made Osmeña acting president at various points in 1943-44. Our national trauma under Marcos, who disappeared from view at various crucial times due to failing health, but who refused to clearly spell out a line of succession (out of fear it might worsen the infighting between the Imelda-Ver and Enrile camps and so on), has made the public paranoid about the state of our president's health.

This is a paranoia born of the past but irrelevant in the present. The Constitution clearly ordains a line of succession, and there is a designated substitute for the president: the vice president. To my mind, therefore, the state of a candidate's health, or that of a president, is more about what the handling of health issues says about the character of a leader than it does any real political issues. Sick people are living longer and longer, if they have proper care, while we all know many cases of extremely healthy people suddenly dying due to freak accidents or strange diseases. Any person elected president could die at any time, while history is full of examples of leaders who have benefited from the introspection that chronic illness can bring.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Member of the family

YOUNG BLOOD

Cath Libarnes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

HE was with us for almost seven years, and now he's gone. Now we won't be able to admire his pure white complexion or enjoy the comforts he could give us.

Am I talking about a human being? Not exactly, but he was almost human to me. I am talking about our car.

Three months ago, we sold our car to pay off some debts. And until now, we are still experiencing the aftershocks of losing our beloved car. He had become part of our daily routine or, should I say, our lives.

He used to bring me to my high school and then my college. Now, I am forced to take the jeepney and wake up an hour earlier so that I won't get caught in the morning traffic and arrive late in school.

I miss a lot of things about him. Like the times he was relaxing in the garage and I was there on the back seat texting someone at an ungodly hour since it was there that I could find a clear signal. Or the times when it rained so hard and I felt so lucky we had him to keep us from getting drenched. Or the time he was bumped by a jeepney and got bruised but eventually got well again. Or the times we went to places more than 10 hours away from home through nasty, bumpy rough roads even if he was just a simple Toyota Corolla model 1997 and not some sturdy 4x4 with big wheels. Or the times when I would gladly offer friends a ride. Or the times when everything inside him was a mess, with lotions, powder, pens, papers, hairbrush, coins lying everywhere. Or the times when I would take a cat nap on the back seat. Or the time he got so hot, sending us into panic over his condition, or got so depressed and went flat, or almost ran out of gas. Or the times when we had a truly joyful joyride with him.

We can never forget the first time we saw him. We were so excited and we couldn't wait to take even just a brief ride. It was love at first sight I guess.

I surely miss those good old times. It brings me to tears every time I remember some very special moments with him.

There can be no other car like him. Even if in the future we could buy a new one, something bigger and wider, he'd still and would always be the *kotse* we love.

I never thought a mere car could have so much wisdom and give us practical lessons. But he taught us that life is about sacrificing and taking risks. Imagine the many things he sacrificed to provide us what we needed. But it was his final sacrifice that hurt most. We repaid our debts, but lost a dear member of our family.

So what happened to 707? I see him once in a while (just by looking at his back, I can tell its him) and he looks like a she. Once a heavily tinted, secretive man, he has been transformed into this transparent creature wearing a yellow head band that screams "TAXI." Yet, no matter how funny he looks now or how many people have sat on his seats and slammed his doors, he will always be our treasured car. I wish he would understand how grateful I am to him.

Cath Libarnes, 20, graduated recently with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Xavier University.

First car

Sherie S. Sta. Cruz

TOMORROW, my first car will be delivered. My fervent wish for traveling comfortably is finally coming true and I'll be bidding farewell to years of sweating and discomfort inside some public transport vehicle.

Why then do I feel like I am about to break up with someone? Perhaps it's excitement and remorse rolled into one.

But remorse for what? For hours of waiting in line under the grueling heat of the sun or navigating muddy lanes when the skies wept while wearing two-inch stiletto heels, while hoping and praying that I would reach my destination on time? Or is it because I will be seeing less the different faces that mirror everyday life's bliss and sadness?

I'm proud to say I'm a super commuter who's "been there, done that." Like walking from Cubao to Katipunan during the height of a public transport shortage in the mid-'90s, while munching on my favorite 7-11 cheesedog sandwich for dinner and sipping Slurpee.

I learned to balance many balance sheets and compute financial ratios (rates of return on investments, break-even points, sales mix, you name it) while doodling half the time on my way to the university from Antipolo to Manila. And I would sleep on my friends' shoulders (even strangers' when I was overcome by fatigue) on my way back home.

Once, I even managed to finish the accounting software implementation plan and procedure flow for one of my clients inside a bus as I was on my way to Makati.

I've written haikus and poems, inspired by the people and places I happened to be with or pass by in the many years I have traveled the metropolis. Even the thoughts and words for this article came instantaneously while I was stuck in traffic near the Marikina Riverbanks going to Marcos Highway.

I will definitely miss commuting. I will miss riding in FX cabs with sometimes smelly interiors or slow jeepneys, having my immaculate white blouse stained, my freshly shined leather pumps stepped on and squeezing myself into a jampacked MRT during the insane rush hours.

I have spent about half of my life commuting. Still, I thank the Lord for letting me experience the colorful, exciting, sometimes depressing and oftentimes taxing moments of commuting.

I will miss those days but I will not lose the rich and memorable experiences I had. They're part of what I am now: stronger, independent and able to appreciate life's simple blessings.

Tomorrow, I'll have my own car and I'm excited to begin another chapter of my life's journey. I intend to do it with windows open.

Sherie Sta. Cruz, 26, is a business and financial consultant of the Sygma Group of Companies.

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Please send feedback to
jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

Senate bets against legislated wages

AS LABOR DAY approaches, organized workers are demanding an increase in the daily minimum wage. The Broad Alliance for Wage Increase wants an increase of P65, while the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines is pushing for P75. The Kilusang Mayo Uno is seeking a P125 across-the-board increase.

A group of government workers, on the other hand, is demanding a P3,000 across-the-board salary increase, saying that the salaries of most government employees are below the "living wage" of P16,000 a month for a family of six in Metro Manila.

Malacañang said it was up to the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board to decide on the issue. But business groups are opposing any wage increase, saying that the country already has one of the highest labor costs in the region.

Candidates	Wages	Jueteng
 Alvarez, Heherson Independent	Market forces are the best arbiter for the distribution of goods and services. Congress must only intervene to hold the line for fair and decent wages to protect the worth and human dignity of workers.	When I was chair of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee, I indicted the City Mayor of Santiago, my home city, for jueteng. He could go to jail anytime soon not because jueteng, in my belief, is per se illegal, but because it is socially pernicious, victimizing the poorest of the poor and dislocating our values as a people.
 Anson-Roa, Boots Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP)	Congress must be given the ultimate authority to determine wages based on the urgency of the situation. The wage boards are too slow in acting on wage demands of workers, with labor and management representatives in the tripartite body constantly at loggerheads.	I am for legalization because this is a surefire formula for stopping the widespread corruption engendered by jueteng. If legalized, the operators will be paying revenues to the government, not to the officials heretofore enjoying multibillion protection money.
 Barbers, Robert K-4 Coalition	A legislated wage increase may prove to be too rigid. Increase in wages should be immediate, which the Department of Labor and Employment, through the National Wage Board, can do.	Legalizing jueteng may do more harm to our nation's moral fiber. Moreover, legalizing it does not necessarily mean that all illegal numbers games will be put to a stop. What we need is to face it head on by increasing the penalties against jueteng and other illegal numbers games.
 Biazon, Rodolfo K-4 Coalition	No. We cannot legislate minimum wages on a national level because economic conditions differ from region to region.	Yes.
 Cayetano, Pia K-4 Coalition	In tripartism, workers and employers are represented in decision-making bodies of the government. A legislated minimum wage is likewise allowed. The power given to Congress must be judiciously exercised to balance the employees' right to a living wage and the employers' right to reasonable return on investment.	I am not in favor of legalizing jueteng. Gambling erodes the moral fiber of society and gives false hope to the people. Government should focus on providing employment to give the people a real chance at a better future.
 Chavez, Frank Alyansa ng Pag-asa	Yes, provided there is periodic examination so that minimum wages may be restructured to meet the exigencies of the economy as well as the shifting tides of the standards of living.	No. I'm for the complete eradication of jueteng. To me, there is no compromise. Run after jueteng lords. That's my position on kidnapping and illegal drugs. All of them should be eliminated from the face of the Philippines.
 Coo, Olivia "Bong" Alyansa ng Pag-asa	It really depends on what sector we're talking about. Just like me, I'm engaged in the garments business, which is output-oriented. Wages should be fixed based on output. If the output is high, there must be an equivalent wage increase.	I will go for legalization. We should tax it to eliminate grafters and give back jueteng money to the people in terms of services. Since we can't eliminate it, it's better to regulate it like lotto.
 Dilangalen, Didagen KNP	The present law on minimum wage is sufficient. Nevertheless, more dialogue is needed between management and labor.	It is high time to legalize jueteng to generate more revenue for the government. After all, nobody can stop it.
 Enrile, Juan Ponce KNP	I am in favor of leaving the determination of the level of just and reasonable wages to regional wage boards, which must take into account the peculiar economic conditions in their respective jurisdiction.	I am in favor of legalizing jueteng primarily to dismantle the corruption that its "illegal operation" breeds. I am for leaving the matter to each local government unit to decide, in consultation with the people whether jueteng will be allowed. The revenue from jueteng must fund health and education projects.
 Escudero, Sonny KNP	The minimum wage must be legislated periodically to raise the amount, which is applicable nationwide, to realistic levels. Thereafter, we must allow the regional tripartite and wages productivity board to adjust the same as dictated by prevailing economic conditions.	For as long as other forms of gambling are allowed by law (i.e. cockfights, casinos, lotteries and bingos) there is no reason why jueteng should be singled out. I'm in favor of legalization to eliminate the corruption associated with it, as well as to provide more revenue for government.
 Estrada, Jinggoy KNP	No answer.	No answer.
 Gatmaytan, Nicanor, Jr. Alyansa ng Pag-asa	Yes. The regional wage boards cannot cope with their functions because of pressures from Malacañang and from legislators. But once we have a legislated minimum wage, this is enforceable all over the country.	I would suggest that it be made into another small town lottery. That would depend on a case-to-case basis. The people should be consulted together with the Church. It's for the benefit of the community or the residents.
 Gordon, Richard K-4 Coalition	It is but right to have a minimum wage. However, in areas where employment is very low, a legislated minimum wage should not apply and market forces should be allowed to set the level of wages in order to attract jobs. What is important is for everybody to have a job.	I am not against the legalization of jueteng, especially if it will directly benefit communities with infrastructure and socio-civic projects.
 Herrera, Ernesto KNP	The power to set minimum wages should reside in the regional tripartite wage and productivity boards, as the new law prescribes. The membership of the wage boards should include more representatives from the labor sector.	Law enforcement against jueteng has failed to live up to expectation. The solution is not to make legal what is illegal. On the other hand, the P50 billion or more that could be earned from government-regulated jueteng could help our people. The people deserve the right to vote on the issue.
 Hussin, Parouk K-4 Coalition	This is necessary to set a benchmark for the cost of doing business nationwide. However, subsequent increases or granting of additional benefits to the workers should be done on a case-to-case basis, taking into consideration the peculiar characteristic of the region.	Under Islam, any form of gambling, whether legal or illegal, is prohibited or *haram.*
 Jaworski, Robert K-4 Coalition	Compensation should be discussed by the employers and employees. There will be more incentives if there is an open discussion with the management. We should also pay more attention to job generation and entrepreneurship.	I am for legalization in order for the government to collect its rightful share of revenues and make the operations more transparent and fair to all. But the real issue here is our need to instill the value of hard work to our people so that they don't have to resort to games of chance and "get-rich-quick" schemes.
 Joson, Edno Alyansa ng Pag-asa	This should be the last resort. The minimum wages are adjusted depending on the economic capacity of the region to pay the labor force. Focus should be on how to rationalize the wages by studying the correlation between the living standard, pricing policy and wage policy.	Why is Pagcor only for the rich? And jueteng, only for the poor? Jueteng is blood money, so it must go back to the people. It's the milking cow of politicos and policemen. It should be legalized so people don't get cheated.
 Lapid, Lito K-4 Coalition	We need it because there are more workers than jobs available. Because businessmen are more powerful than the workers, the government should say what the proper wages of the people should be. Without government intervention, the rich businessmen will get richer while the workers suffer.	The government needs new sources of revenue for its projects, but not from gambling.
 Lim, Alfredo KNP	Retain the regional level of fixing the floor wages because different regions have their peculiar financial and labor standards. What serves as a minimum wage for a particular region might be too much or too low for another.	Any form of gambling is vicious and erodes the moral fiber of every individual. I do not favor legalizing jueteng because that will lead to further degeneration and impoverishment of the poor. Jueteng caters to the poor but enriches gambling lords.
 Maceda, Ernesto KNP	I'm in favor of legislated minimum wages for the reason that there's always been a tendency to deadlock in regional wage boards.	I'm totally against the legalization of jueteng. We should even ban the slot machines outside casinos.
 Madrigal, Jamby KNP	Minimum wage need not be the subject of legislation. Wages should be determined by mutual agreement between labor and capital.	Since the government has already legalized gambling like casinos, lotto and sweepstakes, why not include jueteng?
 Mauricio, Mel "Batas" Alyansa ng Pag-asa	When the minimum wages adopted by the tripartite board are not attuned to the realities of the workers, the government can come in and legislate the wage adjustments.	Why deprive the government of income that it can derive from the legalization of jueteng? Right now, some dubious personalities are the ones benefiting from the numbers game. Let's allow our people to benefit from jueteng by legalizing it. Government can collect appropriate taxes from jueteng.
 Mercado, Orly K-4 Coalition	Wages can reflect workers' productivity while protecting their interest as our economy moves toward greater competitiveness. Leave the discretion to increase wages to the wage boards. National laws should be used to enforce and improve benefits like social security, housing fund and health insurance.	Legalization of jueteng under a credible agency that is mandated to support social programs such as health, education and welfare can succeed.
 Osmeña, John K-4 Coalition	Organized labor is less than 10 percent of the labor force. Therefore, as much as 90 percent of the labor force is at risk of misrepresentation. Experience shows that legislated wages are not enforceable, denying workers what is due them. Free market forces should therefore operate within our framework.	Yes. Casinos are legal, so is *sabong* and horse racing. Jueteng is no different form any of these. So why not?
 Padilla, Carlos Senatorial bet of Panfilo Lacson	Yes, I am in favor. Actually, I am the co-author of the bill proposing a P125 increase in the minimum wage.	Generally, I am against any form of gambling because I believe it is immoral. However, if government admits that it can't handle jueteng, it better be legalized so it can be regulated.
 Pimentel, Aquilino, Jr. KNP	I'm in favor of wage increase. But the way to do it is either of two ways. Follow regional wage boards or do it by industry. In either case, labor input is necessary.	The Philippine National Police has failed to relieve police commanders in areas where jueteng continues to operate in open disregard of the so-called one strike rule.
 Rasul-Bernardo, Amina KNP	Let us consult the affected sectors. While wage increases are necessary, it should be supportable by the industries/companies affected. However, Collective Bargaining Agreements are tested instruments for wage determination in many countries. In the Philippines, moreover, we have regional wage boards.	Jueteng reminds me of the US prohibition of alcohol, which drove the producers and buyers underground and increased organized crime.
 Revilla, Ramon "Bong", Jr. K-4 Coalition	If there's a need to raise it, raise it. But it really depends on the capacity of the economy.	Yes, to avoid corruption of our officials. It will generate more taxes and employment.
 Roxas,Manuel "Mar" III K-4 Coalition	The present tripartite system is workable. I am for improving the system, though, by creating industry specific boards that could be more responsive to the dynamics of specific sectors. A legislated wage increase across the board would be counterproductive. Those without work will find it harder to get a job.	It's time we end the double standard and the pretense. Lotto, Pagcor and the sweepstakes are practiced legally. Jueteng is a fact of life in the country. Legalizing it will remove the corruption from officials who coddle it and will generate more revenues for livelihood and social services.
 Santiago, Miriam K-4 Coalition	The Philippines is a market economy, and hence legislated minimum wages are counterproductive. In a competitive economy, as a rule, wages should be allowed to seek their own level, in order to prioritize training and competence.	Rhetoric about the evils of jueteng has remained just that: pious rhetoric. As a lawyer, I am in favor of legalizing jueteng, so that the graft money that it breeds can be turned over to the national treasury as public funds, instead of being appropriated by the police and local government executives.
 Sonza, Jay Alyansa ng Pag-asa	There is an upside and downside . The economic conditions vary from region to region and there is a tendency to abuse the present system that pegs the wage of workers based on regional economic profiles. So labor pushes for a legislated wage hike because the wages don't reflect the prevailing conditions.	Regulation of all numbers game should be pursued. I want government out of Pagcor and the PCSO. Moral ascendancy should be a primary consideration. You can't tell people not to gamble while you're operating gambling institutions.
 Tatad, Francisco KNP	Wage setting should be a function of the market, subject to negotiation between labor and management. Where workers' rights are guaranteed, the state does best not by acting as negotiator but by making sure there is a level playing field. Minimum wage legislation should be limited to unorganized workers.	If jueteng, a notorious source of corruption, cannot be eradicated, it should at least be strictly regulated, instead of being allowed to remain underground under the protection of corrupt policemen, media men and politicians. This should at least drive away corruption and bring in revenue for the state.
 Yasay, Perfecto Alyansa ng Pag-asa	Yes, but the law should give the Department of Labor the opportunity to improve on it. Otherwise, if you will not legislate, the people can go below that But at the same time you would not want to come up with a fixed legislation on minimum wage because the cost of living and economic conditions change.	I'm not in favor of legalizing jueteng. To begin with, I'm not in favor of gambling. Therefore, all forms of gambling should be eliminated.

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Strain of flu deadlier than SARS worries DOH

BAGUIO CITY—The Department of Health's disease prevention and control center (DPCC) is bracing for the onslaught of a strain of flu in Asia, but doctors said the government is incapable of subsidizing immunization programs for new diseases.

Dr. Myrna Cabotaje, DPCC national director, said the government is more fearful of a pandemic flu attack than the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which hit Asia and Canada between 2002 and 2003. SARS had since resurfaced this month in China, where it reportedly originated.

The DPCC made this disclosure at a national workshop on the DOH's extended program on immunization (EPI) here.

Dr. Howard Sobel, an immunization program coordinator of the World Health Organization, said the last recorded pandemic flu was in 1919.

Sobel, however, stressed that measles by far still has the fastest contamination rate compared to SARS.

Dr. Ruben Siapno, an EPI specialist of the DOH Manila office, said Asia is entering its rainy season, which is a matter of concern for doctors engaged in the prevention of respiratory diseases like SARS.

While it is preparing for the pandemic flu, the government has been focusing instead on preventive quarantine systems for pandemic flu and SARS because it would be hard put producing vaccines against the flu, Cabotaje said.

Although the success of the government's measles immunization program could have given the Philippines a feasible network to contain these new diseases, Cabotaje said the government would need to use all its resources to provide immunization vaccines for flu.

Even the government's medicine procurement program would not be sufficient if realigned to obtain immunization vaccines, she said.

Dr. Antonio Bautista, DOH Cordillera spokesperson, said the country's immunization program has started to decline, years after WHO credited the Philippine health care project as a world-class success story.

But national surveys, conducted before and after the immunization programs, indicated that government doctors still vaccinated 94 percent of the country's children, he said.

Cabotaje said the slight decline in the number of immunized children this year could be traced to the early rains, as well as to groups wary of government health programs.

Floods prevented doctors from efficiently processing immunization programs in Surigao del Norte. In the Cordillera, the rains also slowed down doctors who were required to climb mountains to reach communities.

Bautista said the program may have missed 40,000 children nationwide, but the DOH has managed to vaccinate 273,483 children in Cordillera this year. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

TOTO ANTONIO
Vice-Governor
Independent Party

WAITING FOR GODOT! EDWIN BACASMAS/PDI PHOTO
The candidate on the poster on the wall is nowhere to be found as a woman and child sit it out to wait to get a glimpse of the country's action king who is now running for President.

4 Turkish teachers held for terror tag deported

COTABATO CITY—The four Turkish nationals earlier arrested for alleged ties with the al-Qaida network of Osama Bin Laden had already been deported, a ranking Muslim official said.

But Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA) Undersecretary Zamzamin Ampatuan said the alleged terror links have nothing to do with the deportation of Ismael Kocabiyikk, Alpaslan Gul, Ahmed Kaya, and Mansour Omercikoglu.

He said the Turks were sent home after authorities found that their visas and other working documents have already expired.

The foreigners have taught in an Islamic school here, which is owned by Ampatuan's family.

But he said if they were not embroiled in a controversy, the Turks could have renewed their documents.

Ampatuan said the foreigners were hurt by the allegations against them.

"They told me that they will no longer come back to the country," he said. *Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Top hijacker nabbed

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City—Police from Batangas and Quezon arrested the suspected "hijack king" in Southern Tagalog, a police report said over the weekend. The suspect was identified as Edilberto Hiwatig, 39, believed to be the leader of the notorious "Hiwatig Gang" operating in the region. Chief Insp. Ricardo Villanueva, head of the Quezon 415th Provincial Police Mobile Group, said they arrested the suspect in Barangay Pulo, San Antonio, Quezon last Thursday while he was aboard a Besta van. Hiwatig was arrested in connection with a string of robbery and hijacking cases. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

I killed in road accident

GUMACA, Quezon—An unidentified woman died and at least 24 other passengers suffered injuries Friday evening, when the bus they were riding in bumped the steel railings along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Saatre here. Police said the Lucena-bound Rona and Ryan Bus Liner being driven by Joseph Paquilbari suddenly lost its brakes. The driver lost control of the wayward vehicle until it slammed into the steel railings along the road and turned turtle after the impact. Soldiers rushed the wounded to the nearest hospital. The lone fatality died while being treated at the hospital. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Ex-Cafgu shot dead

CANDELARIA, Quezon—A former member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit was shot to death by an Army soldier on Friday in Sitio Taguan, Barangay Bukal Sur here. Police identified the victim as Angelito Lasat, 37, a resident of the village, and the suspect as Cpl. Jerry Platino, assigned with the 4th Special Forces based in Rosario, Batangas. Police said while Lasat's group was having a drinking session in front of the house of the suspect, Platino arrived with his father and a brother. A heated argument ensued between Platino and Lasat, after which the suspect fired at Lasat in different parts of the body. Lasat was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. The suspect surrendered to his commanding officer.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

R. Davalos; 65

Rafael Rojas y Davalos, 65, died of prostate cancer on April 21. His body lies at the family residence in Barangay Silonay, Calapan City. He was buried yesterday at the Calapan Catholic Cemetery. Rojas, only 25 when elected into office, was serving as barangay captain for 40 years at the time of his death. He also presided over the Association of Barangay Captains of Calapan from 1992 to 2002.

Cop restricted

BACOLOD CITY—A policeman was placed under restrictions after he was found positive for shabu use during a random drug test conducted on policemen of the Bacolod City Police Office on April 19. PO3 Edwin Yulo, who was assigned to the Headquarters Service Support Unit, was ordered restricted to the city police camp last April 22 by Senior Supt. Mario Avenido, Bacolod Police director. The tests were made by Insp. Alexis Guinanao of the police crime laboratory. Yulo was one of the 18 policemen subjected to drug tests and was one of the seven suspected of using illegal drugs.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Mindoro farmers' release demanded

CALAMBA CITY—Militant peasant groups and human rights activists yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to order the release of six farmers who they said were wrongly accused of killing the two sons of former Rep. Ricardo Quintos in December 1997.

The farmers, called Mamburao 6, were the primary suspects in the killing.

Among them was former Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) national council member Manolito Matricio.

Danilo Ramos, KMP secretary general, said their group was disappointed at the snail-pace action of the government panel to implement the contents of the Second Oslo Joint Statement.

He said both the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front signed the agreement at the second round of peace talks in Norway earlier this month.

"The government should have started the necessary actions regarding the release of the Mamburao 6 and Donato Continente," said Ramos.

"This only showed the government's insincerity in the peace process with the NDF. The release of the Mamburao farmers is long overdue."

Orly Marcellana of the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan noted that the release of the political prisoners should have been done three years ago after "the stalled peace talks in 2001 recommended the release of the farmers."

"This is a clear form of injustice perpetrated by the government against poor farmers," Marcellana said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

More cops deployed to Negros for polls

DUMAGUETE CITY—At least 70 more policemen from the Regional Mobile Group (RMG) arrived in Negros Oriental on Tuesday to help ensure peaceful elections in the province.

Manuel Advincula, Commission on Elections (Comelec) provincial supervisor, said the arrival of the policemen from Bohol brought to 200 the number of policemen in three towns and two cities classified as hotly contested areas.

These are the towns of Jimalalud, Zamboanguita, and Sta. Catalina and the cities of Tanjay and Bais.

Advincula said he was still waiting for the recommendation of Senior Supt. Marciano del Mar, provincial police director, on how many policemen should be assigned to each of these areas.

Advincula said Army soldiers were also keeping a tight watch on a city and five municipalities due to the reported presence of the communist rebels. These were Canlaon City, and the towns of Vallahermoso, Guihulngan, La Libertad, Tayasan and Ayungon.

"If we analyze the situation, we can say that the hinterlands of (the) province are now a little bit secure since we have enough Army soldiers and RMG personnel," Advincula said.

"I think at this point of time we have nothing to worry (about). We have in place all the available troops to secure the hinterlands," he added. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
EAST AVENUE, DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

in Philippine Peso

ASSETS	December 31, 2003
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,061,995,935
Short-term Money Placements	1,489,269,726
Treasury Bills/Notes/Bonds	6,416,499,498
Available-for-Sale Securities	8,171,383,259
Marketable Securities - Trading	914,280,972
Receivables	3,665,089,433
Other Current Assets	125,267,369
Total Current Assets	**23,843,786,192**
Non-current Assets	
Investment in Associates	5,666,406,295
Other Investments	133,255,353,846
Property and Equipment	4,344,765,443
Other Non-current Assets	3,738,476,922
Total Non-current Assets	**147,005,002,506**
TOTAL ASSETS	**170,848,788,698**
LIABILITIES AND RESERVES	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	1,066,169,693
Non-current Liabilities	1,671,796,981
Total Liabilities	**2,737,966,674**
Reserves	**168,110,822,024**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND RESERVES	**170,848,788,698**

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
QUEZON CITY) S.S.

We, CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ and ERLINDA O. DEL ROSARIO of the above-mentioned institution do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above consolidated balance sheet are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ
President & CEO

ERLINDA O. DEL ROSARIO
Vice President, Controllership

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 22nd day of April 2004 at Quezon City, affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 15250513 issued at Makati City on 27 February 2004 and Residence Certificate No. 13954813 issued at Quezon City on 29 January 2004, respectively.

NOTARY PUBLIC

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Head of village chiefs sues Bulacan solon

HAGONOY, Bulacan—The president of the Association of Barangay Captains in this town on Friday sued Bulacan Rep. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado after the latter allegedly ordered his bodyguards to kill him.

But Alvarado, a former mayor here, denied that he had threatened to kill Antonio Vengco, the barangay official, saying he only castigated him for his negligence in mobilizing resources to stop a fire that hit a school building here on Wednesday.

Vengco, Alvarado said, is the head of the municipal council's disaster response committee.

Vengco, who filed the complaint before the prosecutor's office, claimed that Alvarado ordered his bodyguards to kill him ("*itumba nyo na yan, yariin nyo na yan*") after he and the legislator argued.

Alvarado and Vengco met in an area near the Hagonoy East Central School in Barangay Poblacion to check on the fire that hit the school on Wednesday.

Vengco said Alvarado was angry because the town's three fire trucks were not available.

Alvarado, the ABC president said, pointed a finger at him and was ranting at the poor leadership of local officials.

"I was just about to extend my hand and greet him when he suddenly reacted that way. We ended up arguing," Vengco said.

He said he left after his fellow barangay officials asked him to let the incident pass.

But Vengco said Alvarado, at that point, told his bodyguards, "*Pag bumalik yang si* Vengco, *itumba nyo na yan, yariin na yan* (If Vengco returns, kill him)."

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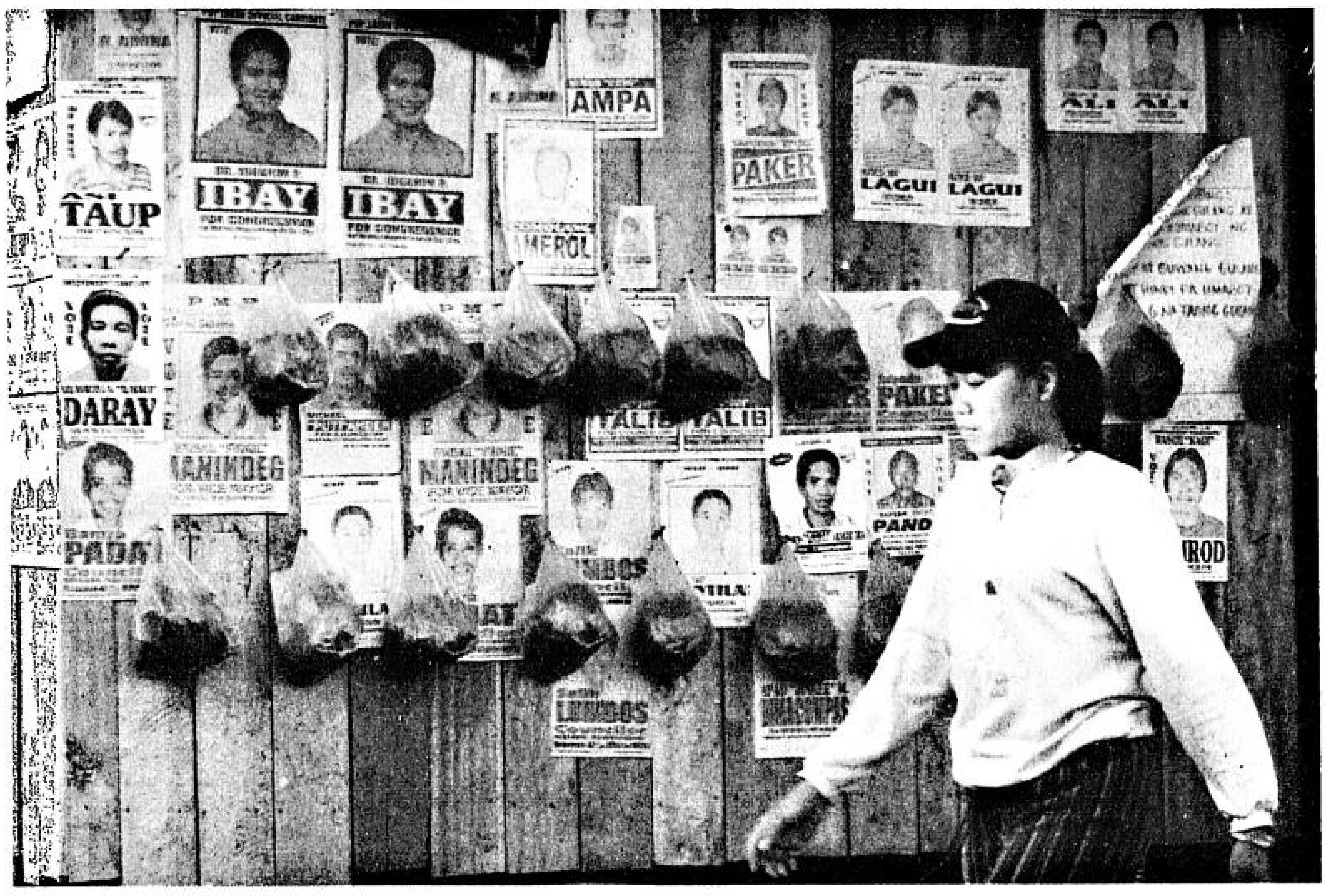

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ERNIE SARMIENTO/PDI PHOTO

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Three days after, Chipeco received a "soft copy" of the voters' list based on the data submitted by the Comelec office in Calamba.

Chipeco said he paid P20,000 for the CD that contains the names of the 170,299 voters in Calamba.

He said he was stunned when his name and those of his relatives were not included in the list of voters in Barangay Uno where they registered.

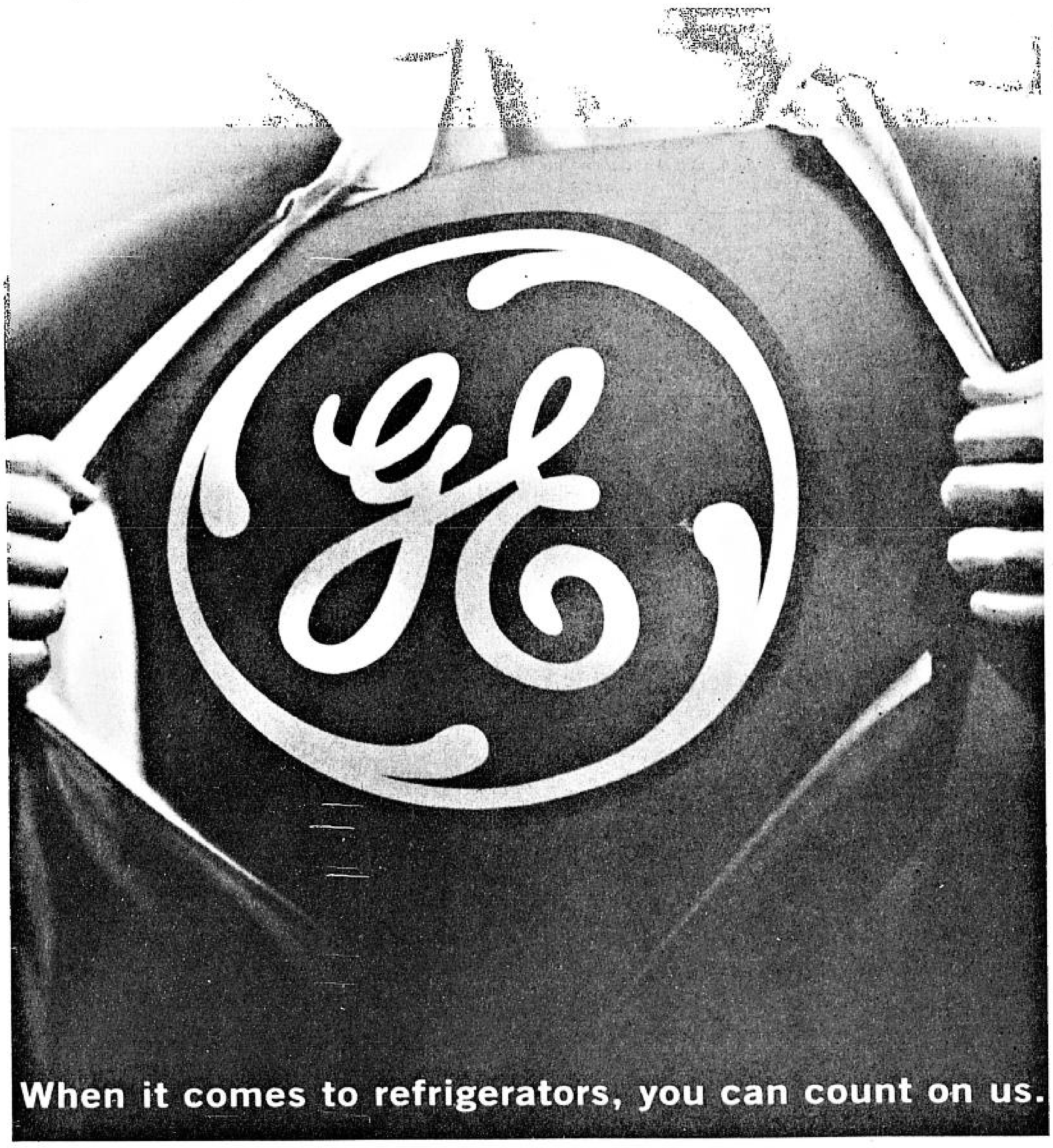
Later, he found his name and the names of his relatives registered in Barangay Pansol, some 4 km away from Barangay Uno.

Worse, he found that in Barangay 7, the total number of voters exceeded 24,000. He said the chair of the barangay told him that there were only about 1,700 voters from the place.

Chipeco also found that in some precincts in Barangay Banlic, the total number of voters reached 554 and another totaled 316.

He said the number of voters should average only about 200 per precinct.

Chipeco said they are "pleading" with the Comelec to immediately release the voter's ID and the official list of voters with their corresponding precincts. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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Group says GMA now enjoys 'masa' backing

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Alex Cauigurian, secretary general of the group Pro-Gloria, said the bulk of the crowd that greets the nationwide caravan at its stops is composed of the so-called "masa."

The caravan started March 27 and is now making the rounds of Tarlac and Bicol.

It seeks to gather at least 3 million signatures in support of Ms Macapagal and present the President's reform agenda to the people.

The caravan had already toured Northern Luzon and Visayas and Mindanao. It aims to cover 40 major provinces with a total voting population of 36 million.

"We are overwhelmed by the support of our countrymen for President Arroyo. We did not expect that even the *masa* is solid behind our President," Cauigurian said in a statement.

He said Biyaheng Gloria was initiated to popularize the accomplishments of Ms Macapagal, especially among the rural folk in different parts of the country.

The caravan involves a Gloria Look-Alike contest, palengke tours and small town-hall meetings.

"We were surprised that our people are aware of the accomplishments of the President in their areas," Cauigurian added.

DPWH steps up IT use

THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways has stepped up its application of information technology in overseeing the country's infrastructure development.

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"This new system will provide updated information on status of projects in the field," Soriquez said, describing the extent the new system will help top management in reaching timely decisions.

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He also took steps to increase transparency in the department's operations, claiming that necessary steps were taken to curb corruption in the department.

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According to Soriquez, the Executive Information System (ExIS), allows them to better monitor performance in the field that will ensure timely completion of projects.

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INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

May pag-asa na ba si Loren?

Ayon sa pinakahuling survey ng SWS, 9 percentage points na lang ang lamang ni Noli kay Loren, at 14 percent ang undecided. May pag-asa pa ba si Loren na humabol? (May oras pa ba?) Ang sagot nina Sen, Legarda; vice presidential candidate Hermie Aquino; Atty. Jessie Andres, tagapagsalita ni Sen. de Castro; at INQUIRER columnist Belinda Cunanan. Tunghayan ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

ABC

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Head of village chiefs sues Bulacan solon

HAGONOY, Bulacan—The president of the Association of Barangay Captains in this town on Friday sued Bulacan Rep. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado after the latter allegedly ordered his bodyguards to kill him.

But Alvarado, a former mayor here, denied that he had threatened to kill Antonio Vengco, the barangay official, saying he only castigated him for his negligence in mobilizing resources to stop a fire that hit a school building here on Wednesday.

Vengco, Alvarado said, is the head of the municipal council's disaster response committee.

Vengco, who filed the complaint before the prosecutor's office, claimed that Alvarado ordered his bodyguards to kill him ("*itumba nyo na yan, yariin nyo na yan*") after he and the legislator argued.

Alvarado and Vengco met in an area near the Hagonoy East Central School in Barangay Poblacion to check on the fire that hit the school on Wednesday.

Vengco said Alvarado was angry because the town's three fire trucks were not available.

Alvarado, the ABC president said, pointed a finger at him and was ranting at the poor leadership of local officials.

"I was just about to extend my hand and greet him when he suddenly reacted that way. We ended up arguing," Vengco said.

He said he left after his fellow barangay officials asked him to let the incident pass.

But Vengco said Alvarado, at that point, told his bodyguards, "*Pag bumalik yang si* Vengco, *itumba nyo na yan, yariin na yan* (If Vengco returns, kill him)."

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No need to import with hybrid rice, says DA

By Joyce Mejillano
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LIGAO CITY—Bicol has a very good chance of not importing rice at all if Bicol farmers will cultivate hybrid rice varieties, a Department of Agriculture official said.

He said if farmers would be educated on the planting of hybrid rice varieties, rice production of the region might double.

During the regional rice festival held at Batang, Ligao City recently, Jose Dayao disclosed that Bicol now has at least five varieties of hybrid rice—which include the Bigante, SL8, Magilas, Mestiso1 and Mestiso2—but only 2 to 3 percent of Bicol farmers are cultivating these.

He said last year Bicol farmers posted an 8 percent increase in rice production.

He said there was a need to be more efficient in rice production since the total land area allocated for rice farming continues to depreciate due to the conversion of ricefields into residential areas.

He said in two to three years, the total of 105,000 hectares of ricefields in Bicol might go down to 10,000 hectares.

As of now, only about 2,300 hectares are planted with the hybrid varieties and Dayao said the DA wants the area to increase by 10 percent at least.

Hybrid rice, according to Dayao, is very sensitive and needs proper irrigation.

The government has gone full blast in the promotion of hybrid rice following reports that farmers who went into hybrid rice planting and production enjoyed increased incomes.

The DA has reported that hybrid rice production has reaped benefits for farmers in Isabela and Davao, but its promotion continues nationwide.

Townsfolk urge Army to move troops out

DAVAO CITY—The Municipal Peace and Order Council (MPOC) of Laac town in Compostela Valley has sought the removal of the Army's 60th Infantry Battalion because of the involvement of its soldiers in a wave of violence there that led to the death of at least five people, including the town's police chief, since last week.

The Army contingent arrived in Laac only on Friday morning from a previous posting in another area.

Laac Mayor Roger Arambala said the arrival of the soldiers proved to be a nightmare for the people of the town.

Rampage

Arambala said the day after their arrival, soldiers from the said Army unit immediately went on a rampage and gunned down at least three people, including a village official.

He said Kagawad Ganadi Pinamaylan of Barangay Datu Dabaw, Charlie-Utag, Charlie Sagiwan and Ernesto Saguiwan were in an eatery when the soldiers arrived and shot them on Saturday afternoon.

Only Ernesto survived the attack.

All the victims were members of the militant group Bayan Muna.

On Monday, soldiers from the same unit gunned down Laac police chief Insp. George Torres and exprisoner Edgar Basoc, who were eating inside a videoke bar past 10 p.m.

Gunned down

Torres and Basoc died of multiple gunshot wounds.

The violence, Arambala said, had prompted the peace and order council to demand the pullout of the 60th IB.

He said the residents fear that the continued stay of the soldiers, who appear to be trigger happy, would endanger the lives of more people.

Lt. Col. Agane Adriatico, military spokesperson for Southeastern Mindanao, said the military was investigating the deaths of Torres and Basoc.

However, he said those killed on Saturday were rebels and that their deaths were the result of a legitimate encounter.

Adriatico said the military was conducting a routine foot patrol when they chanced upon the rebels. *Anthony Allada and Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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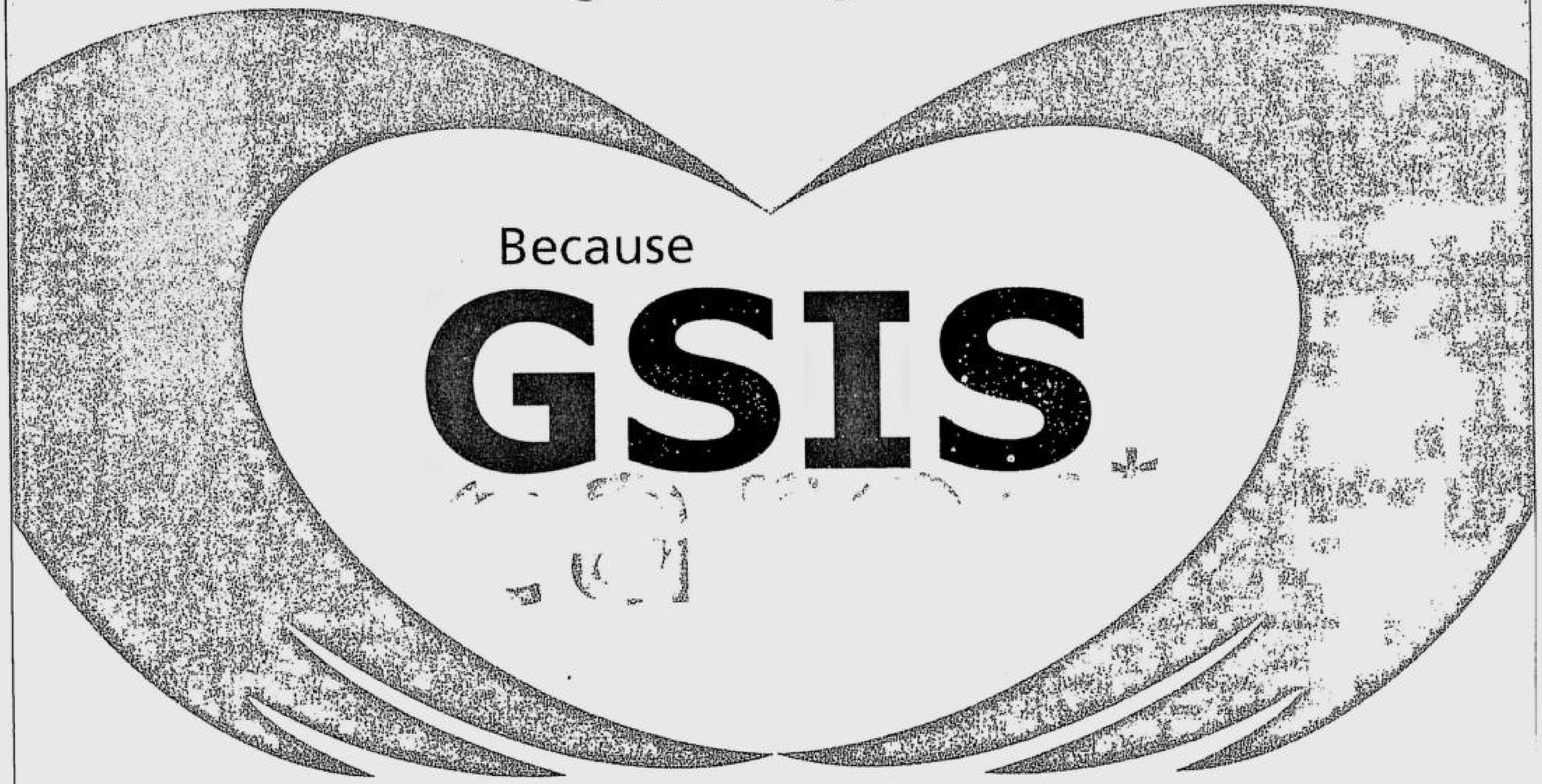

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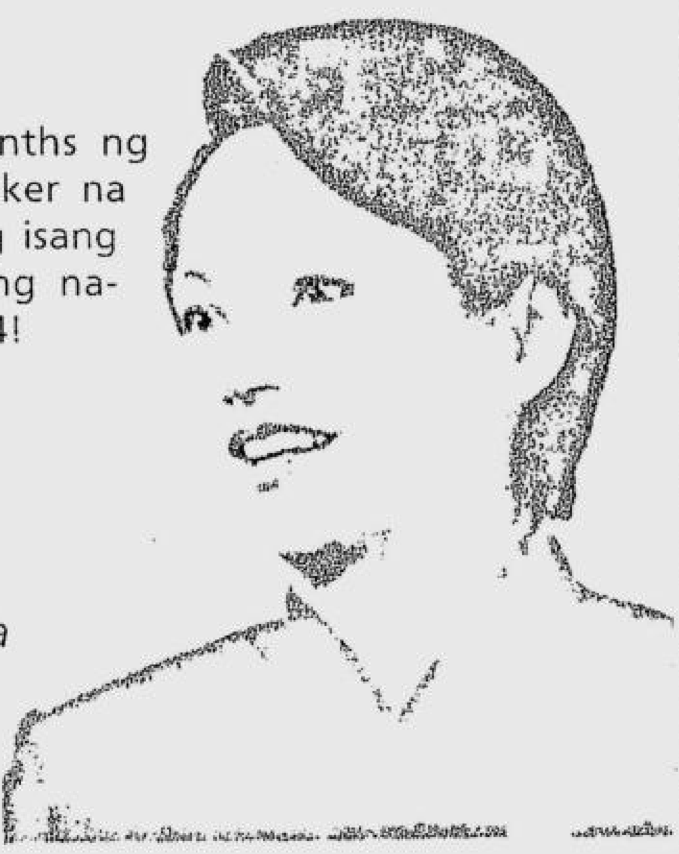

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Albay history preserved in photos

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Legazpi City

THE PHILIPPINE National Railways during the Japanese occupation.

BELIEVING that development should not destroy an area's historical and cultural sense, a group of architects has been going around Bicol to exhibit old photographs about Albay.

They hope that through the photos, the young ones and, perhaps, even the old, will be aware of the region's rich history.

Titled "Hinulnan kan Bikol" (Origin of Bicol), the exhibit began in February and will run up to the end of the year, covering centers in Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Sorsogon, Masbate and Catanduanes. It is organized by the United Architects of the Philippines chapter in Legazpi City, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Aquinas University of Legazpi's College of Architecture and Fine Arts.

Landmarks

The photos include those of the historic San Rafael Bridge over the Tibu River, where the Battle of Legazpi took place in 1901; the cruiser "Nashville," which bombarded the defenses of Bicol resistance fighters on Jan. 23, 1900; the Philippine National Railways station in Legazpi during the Japanese occupation; Baldosa de Comercio (Building for Commerce) in 1842; Stillianopolous Building in 1928 (now the Liberty Commercial Center); Legazpi Port in 1915; and Pacific Commercial Co. in 1928.

Also on display are photos of the Casa Real de Albay (Royal House of Albay) in 1900, which is now the City Hall of Legazpi; Gabaldon School in 1928 (named after Assemblyman Isauro Gabaldon); Hinulnan ni Daragang Magayon (Origin of the Majestic Mayon Volcano) and its eruptions up to 1947); Mercado o Saudan (marketplace) in 1877; accounts of Jose Ma. Peñaranda, the first governor of Albay, in 1834; the abaca industry in 1820; and the Sunborn Airfield (now Legazpi Airport) in 1928.

Foreign photos

ALBAY'S provincial capitol in 1907 was designed by William Parsons, who also designed the Philippine Normal University and the Manila Hotel in Manila.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Putting up the exhibit was not an easy project, especially because historians and only a few local tourism and historical agencies possessed old photos of Albay.

Rino D. A. Fernandez, UAP-Legazpi president, said most of the pictures they used came from Spain and Maryland, USA.

"We researched abroad and even bought these pictures from foreign libraries, which proved costly to us since they are already antique and for classic exhibition purposes only. The photos cost from P2,500 to P11,000 each, depending on antiquity and relevance to Albay," he said.

Fernandez learned that the local residents did not have documented pictures of the past because foreign photographers would come 15 or 25 years after the last picture-taking. For instance, the photos of Legazpi's port were taken in 1915 and in 1940 by the foreign photographers who would visit the Philippines just for visual documentation.

"There's no doubt why they have the photos and the locals don't. They did not steal them from us; they really took the shots for their own documentation. Maybe, some of our grandfathers here have pictures, but let's face it, most, if not all, of them have been lost or destroyed," Fernandez said.

He underscored the importance of preserving cultural heritage and historical landmarks by taking photos for documentation purposes, just like the foreigners did in Albay.

Advocacy

The exhibit was a result of an advocacy of the UAP-Legazpi to spare the historical and cultural landmarks in Albay from emerging plans and construction programs of local governments that could imperil or destroy them.

"In 2000, we already conceptualized this kind of advocacy," Fernandez said. He cited the fate of Peñaranda Park, which was built during the 17th century, along with the Casa Real and Albay Cathedral, following renovation and restoration works, which, he added, greatly affected many Bicolanos.

Fernandez was referring to the "new face" given to the Peñaranda Park, where trees, the site of the Liberty Bell and other landmarks were brought down to give way to concrete structures. The Liberty Bell was built to symbolize liberation from Japanese occupation, the UAP president added.

He expressed apprehension that this situation might be repeated, since Legazpi ranked fourth among cities in the country that were undergoing massive urban development. Investors who have come to the city have already erected big establishments.

"The park has ceased to be an ideal place for religious, political, and cultural activities," Fernandez said. Its conversion into an elevated park created a great loss to the sense of history that Jose Ma. Peñaranda, Albay's first governor in 1834, has "strategically built."

"By creating cities, we create ourselves. When we spoil our cities, we despoil ourselves," Fernandez stressed.

Government's support

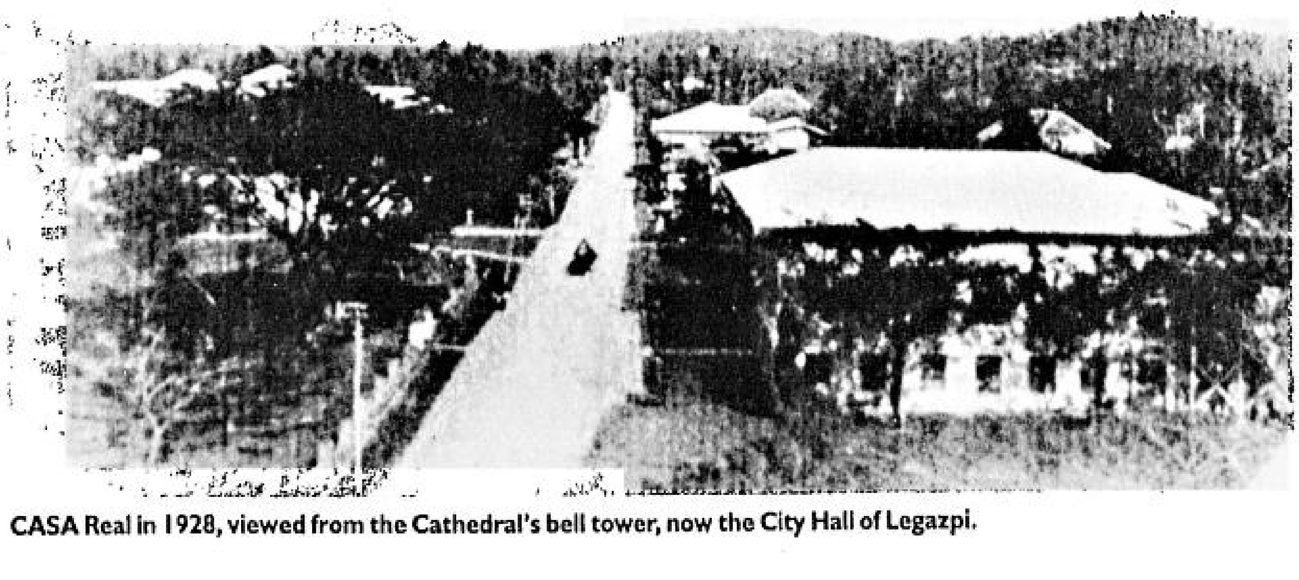
Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara and Mayor Noel Rosal have asked for copies of the remaining photos, having realized their importance in construction plans and programs for urban development, he said.

"At long last, the local governments are now very supportive of our advocacy and program. It's the only time that somehow the local governments in Albay have seen these photos and the past history of Bicol," he noted.

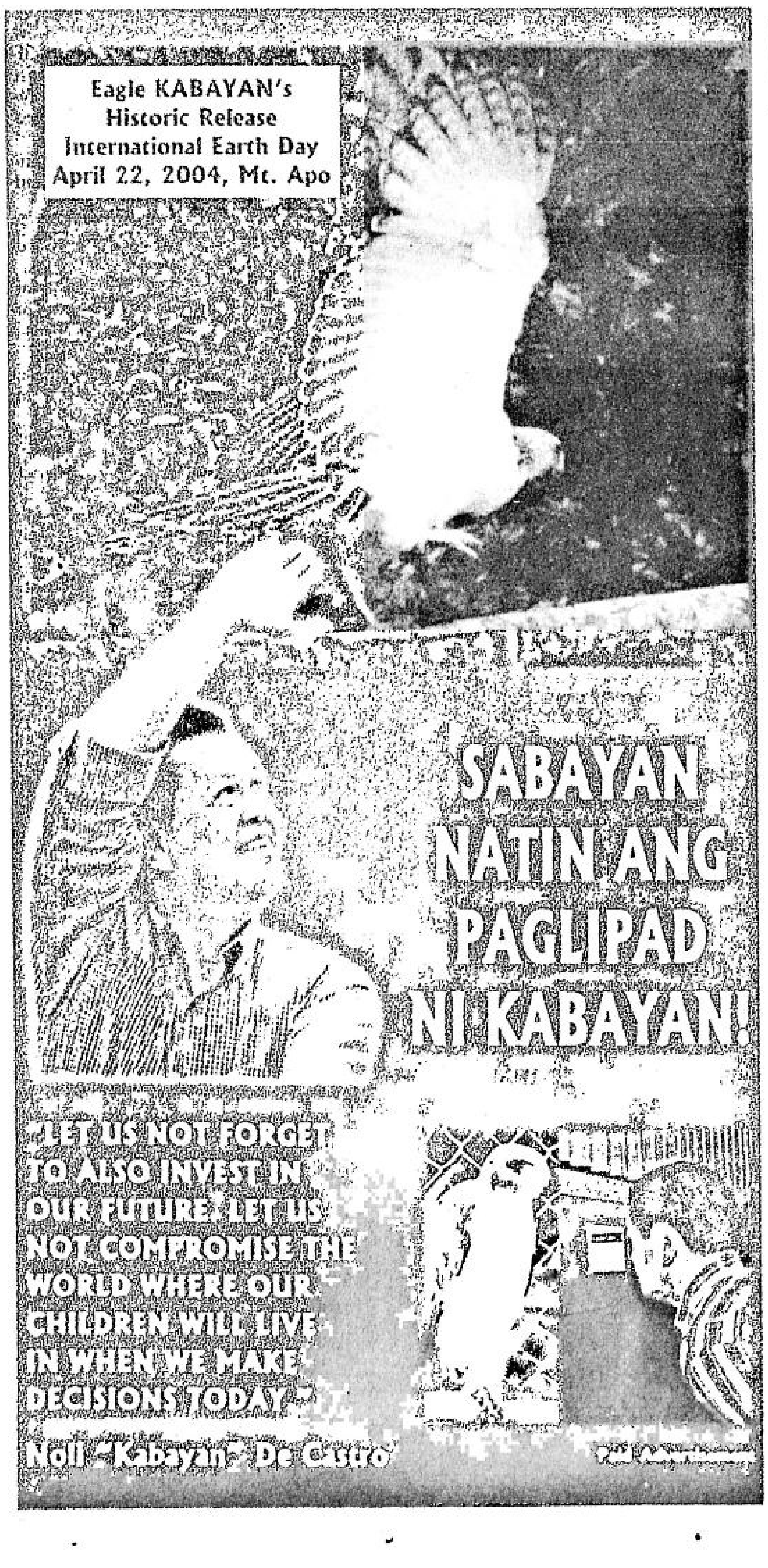
"With this example of the local governments here, hopefully other provinces and cities will save their own important landmarks."

Fernandez said he hoped that after the exhibit reached all strategic venues in the region, it would eventually be placed permanently in the Legazpi Museum, as requested by civic groups and agencies.

> Architects' exhibit seeks to spare historical, cultural landmarks of Albay from threats of renovation, urban dev't programs of local gov'ts



CASA Real in 1928, viewed from the Cathedral's bell tower, now the City Hall of Legazpi.



Eagle KABAYAN's
Historic Release
International Earth Day
April 22, 2004, Mt. Apo

SABAYAN NATIN ANG PAGLIPAD NI KABAYAN!
"LET US NOT FORGET TO ALSO INVEST IN OUR FUTURE. LET US NOT COMPROMISE THE WORLD WHERE OUR CHILDREN WILL LIVE IN WHEN WE MAKE DECISIONS TODAY."
Noli "Kabayan" De Castro

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

FOUR DIGIT
1 7 7 5
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
5 9 9

MEGALOTTO 6/45
6 15 17 25 37 42

GMA orders probe of Rodriguez shooting

By Luige del Puerto and Juliet Labog-Javellana

AN ARMY official said yesterday that witnesses saw two men with rifles jump out of a van that was shot at by soldiers at a checkpoint in Rodriguez, Rizal, before dawn Tuesday.

Lt. Col. Ricardo Nepomuceno disclosed this even as President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the police to investigate the incident where a soldier and three teenagers were wounded.

"Let us not prejudge anybody at this point and I appeal for balanced media coverage," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

Nepomuceno, commanding officer of the 80th Infantry Battalion stationed in Rodriguez, told the INQUIRER that they had witnesses to attest that the first shots came from the van, a Mitsubishi Adventure, where three teenagers were wounded in an ensuing exchange of gunfire.

He, however, refused to give details about his supposed witnesses.

Meanwhile, two of the wounded teenagers, both girls aged 14 and 15, said the soldiers did not bother to help them after the incident.

"They saw us bleeding but did not move a finger to help us," the 14-year-old said.

The soldiers did not stop them from leaving after the incident.

Pasig voters' list padded–Lakas

Bets want polls suspended

By Luige del Puerto

CANDIDATES of the LAKAS Christian Muslim Democrats in Pasig City want the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to suspend the holding of elections in the city, claiming the Certified Voters List (CVL) for Pasig was padded by 130,000.

Congressional candidate Robert "Dodot" Jaworski and mayoralty candidate Rep. Henry Lanot want the Comelec to first "clean up" the voters' list before conducting the elections.

100,000 increase

Comelec records showed that close to 100,000 people have either registered or transferred to the city since the last elections, bringing the total number of voters to about 400,000.

Jaworski said the increase was "statistically improbable" and if proven dubious could spell success or defeat to a candidate, even in the presidential derby.

"Some barangays in the city have more voters than residents," he told the INQUIRER on Tuesday.

He said eight barangays: San Nicolas, Bagong Katipunan, Kapitolyo, Sta. Rosa, San Jose, Sto. Tomas, De la Paz and Oranbo had "questionable voters."

He cited a shanty that was supposed to house 130 voters.

Flying voters

The names of the "residents" were reportedly distributed to different precincts but the camp of Jaworski and Lanot said they traced them all to one house.

According to Jaworski, most of the "flying voters" come from the nearby towns of Taytay and Cainta.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach the Comelec to respond to Jaworski's allegations. Comelec Officer Romeo Alcazar was attending a hearing, a staff member said.

The opposition in the city first complained about the voters' list in January.

At the time, 32,000 "questionable" voters have allegedly turned up in the voters' list for Pasig.

The voters either wrote questionable data or omitted important facts in their registration forms, according to lawyer Jovy Buenagua, Lanot's chief of staff.

Lanot is running for city mayor against former mayor Vicente "Enteng" Eusebio, whose wife is the incumbent local chief executive.

But District I Assistant Comelec Officer Salvadora Mandocdoc then explained that the odd voters might have failed to state their complete addresses only in the second copy of their application forms.

Application forms

"Each application form has two copies—the voters keep the first copy, we keep the second copy," she said. "Each voter must go to a voting precinct, which means he or she must have a complete address."

She also said many Filipinos have the same name, so double or multiple entries are expected.

A POOL'S PLACE

CHILDREN claim a portion of the President Osmeña Highway so they could take a cool dip in an inflatable pool amid a hot summer day.

AFP

PNP nabs 3 ASG suspects in raid

By Christian Esguerra and Michael Jobert Navallo

TWELVE suspected terrorists, including three alleged Abu Sayyaf members, were arrested in a raid at the Muslim community in Culiat, Quezon City, before dawn yesterday.

Dawabi Ben Albi Maulana, and former policemen Talib Masiha Uddin and Arsad Indaman Abduhadi worked directly under slain Abu Sayyaf member Abdulmukim Ong Edris, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military information officer.

Edris was slain in an alleged shootout with the military in August last year, less than a month after he joined Indonesian bomber Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi and fellow Abu member Omar Opik Lasal in bolting their Camp Crame jail.

Fund raising mission

Lucero said Maulana and company had been sent to Metro Manila to raise funds for the bandit group through the illegal drug trade. The business, he said, has long been a steady source of income for the Abu Sayyaf, particularly in Sulu and Basilan.

"We have sufficient evidence to prove their links with the Abu Sayyaf," the official told the INQUIRER.

Shortly before the suspects were presented in a Camp Crame press conference yesterday, Maulana denied he was involved in drug trafficking.

He claimed authorities merely "planted" evidence in his house on Basilan Street, Culiat, to justify the arrest. He also identified himself as provincial coordinator of the Suara Bangsamoro, one of several party list groups accused of serving as front organizations for the New People's Army.

Arms cache

But Maulana and his 11 companions yielded about 100 grams of shabu, an M-14 rifle, two 45-caliber pistols, four MK3A2 fragmentation grenades, three kilos of ammonium nitrate, and hundreds of live ammunition for different gun calibers, according to Supt. Procopio Lapina of the Central Police District.

The rest of the suspects were identified as Musa Sabaddin Abdulrahman, Awop Wadja Ignus, Radjail Karawan Tirih, Raquel Francisco Mabajo, Elroy Pagbunukn Resoor, Pamaran Alain Awali, Abubakar Cuevas Zunco, Hasan Sambani Zunco and Rene Hussien Ladjamalik.

At the press conference, Lapina was cautious in tagging Maulana and company as suspected terrorists. "But we are not discounting the possibility."

A composite team from the police and the military raided Culiat on the strength of nine search warrants, the official said.

The team consisted of representatives from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the National Capital Region Police Office, Central Police District, Western Police District, Special Action Force, and the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force.

If Roco became president...

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I'VE BEEN harping in this space about the uselessness of the Philippine National Police's Internal Affairs Service (IAS). The IAS is an independent body that investigates complaints by civilians against PNP personnel.

Again, I say without batting an eyelash that IAS is a useless agency and should be disbanded.

Once again, IAS proved its uselessness when I inquired about the complaint filed by the father of two boys who were made shooting targets by PO1 Benedict Mamaril of the Special Action Force (SAF).

The boys were bringing a cow to be sold to the market in Malasiqui, Pangasinan, when they were shot at by Mamaril, who was drunk at the time. It's a good thing Mamaril is a lousy shot; instead of the boys, he hit and killed the cow.

My "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" public service program helped the boys' father file the administrative case with IAS office in Pangasinan in April, 2002.

When I inquired about the complaint from IAS yesterday, I was told that the complaint sheet had been lost.

Talagang inutil!

* * *

A major newspaper (not the INQUIRER) published yesterday a photo of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. meeting with a US Senate staff member, a US transport industry representative, and US Commerce Undersecretary James Rogan at the EDSA Shangri-la Plaza in Mandaluyong.

The photo caption said that Poe talked about his platform of government and sought the suggestions from the Americans.

***Sus, Ginoo*! If FPJ can't explain his platform of government to the Filipino electorate, how could he have talked about it with foreigners? Just thinking aloud.**

* * *

If Roco became our president, he would fly regularly to the US to have his prostate cancer treated.

He didn't trust local doctors to diagnose his ailment, he had to go to the US.

Much of the time, Roco would be minding his ailment, instead of attending to the affairs of state.

* * *

Manila mayoralty candidate Mel Lopez keeps on hitting reelectionist Lito Atienza about the "cosmetic" beautification of the city.

Lopez, former mayor, says Atienza has skewed priorities since Manila is mired in crime and drugs.

Nothing can be further from the truth. In all the beautified portions of the city—Baywalk on Roxas Blvd., Moriones in Tondo, Plaza Miranda, Plaza Noli in Ermita, Rajah Sulayman and Paraiso ng Batang Maynila—crime is zero even if many people go to those places. Why? Because uniformed policemen are at every corner.

Atienza is like former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who cleaned up the biggest US city of crime by beautifying the Central Park and fielding policemen there.

Before Giuliani, the Central Park was a no man's land when darkness fell.

* * *

If you want a different kind of spiritual retreat, why not attend one that will be held at the Brahma Kumaris Center for Spiritual Learning?

The two-day retreat will be held at 1020 Magallanes Drive, Tagaytay City, on Saturday and Sunday.

Assembly time at the center is at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday.

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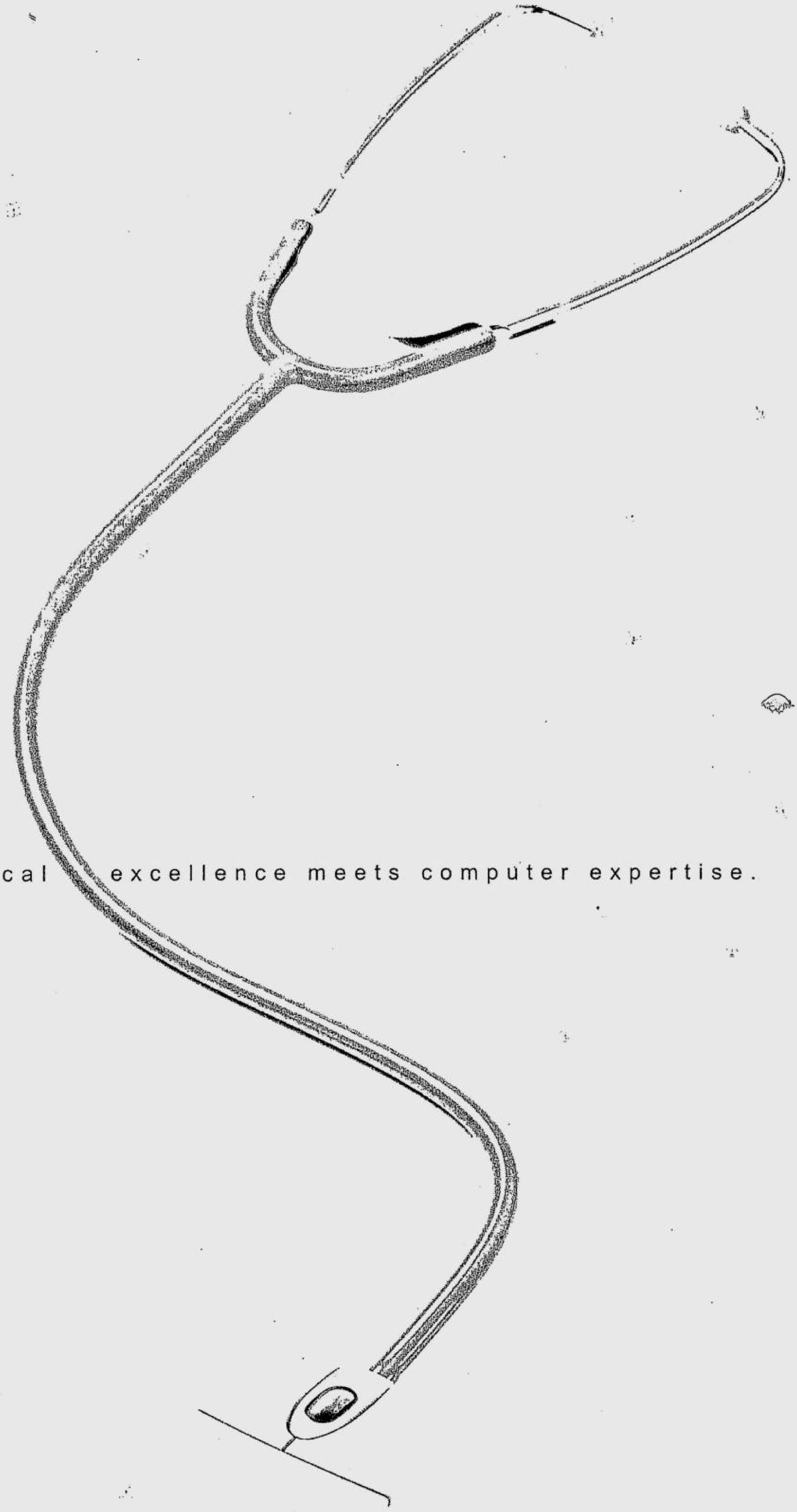
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SPORTS

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: 2004 NBA Playoffs-Rockets vs Lakers, Game 5, First Round; 10 a.m.; Solar Sports (r - 10 p.m.) and Sports Plus (Destiny); 8 p.m.; IBC 13—LA attempts to finish off Houston and advance to the next round to face defending champion San Antonio

TENNIS: Dubai Tennis Championships; 8 p.m.; Solar Sports—See the quarterfinals from the desert in Dubai.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Overall standings After Stage 13

1. R. Tanguilig (PLDT) 52:31:14 hrs.
2. A. Primero (Dole) 13 secs. behind
3. E. Domingo (Postmen) 14 secs. behind
4. J. Calderon (Beer na Beer) 2:06 mins. behind
5. T. Martinez (Beer na Beer) 7:58 mins. behind
6. J. Millanes (Postmen) 10:24 mins. behind
7. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) 10:27 mins. behind
8. O. Quinones (Purefoods) 11:36 mins. behind
9. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) 13:45 mins. behind
10. R. Dolosa (VAT Riders) 14.04 mins. behind

STUDIO 23

2004 TOUR PILIPINAS

Mad scramble as Tour goes to Baguio

Tanguilig hangs on

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VIGAN—Albert Primero and Enrique Domingo yesterday moved menacingly close behind overall leader Rhyan Tanguilig to pave the way for a mad scramble for the yellow jersey going into the two Baguio stages of the Air21 Tour Pilipinas.

The 26-year-old Primero joined hands with Dante Cagas, Orly Villanueva and Michael Ramos to power Dole to victory in the 82-km team time trial serving as the Tour's 13th stage and nearly wiped out Tanguilig's three-minute, 28-second lead.

Primero now stood 13 seconds off Tanguilig, whose PLDT team finished only eighth for the day, clocking one hour 54 minutes 33 seconds as against Dole's leading time of 1:50:18.

The Postmen skippered by Domingo was second fastest for the day, checking in just 20 seconds behind Primero's squad, pushing the erstwhile leader within a minute off Tanguilig from 4:10 at the start of the day.

Primero, already a two-lap winner, could have overtaken Tanguilig if not for the one-minute penalty slapped on him for sharing his drink with a non-teammate during Sunday's 11th stage.

But there's no doubt the overall lead will change hands when the Tour's 79 surviving riders go up to Baguio via Marcos Highway in today's 14th lap.

The next stage on Friday is expected to finally decide the eventual winner when the riders tackle the "killer" Baguio-Baguio stage.

Described by cyclists as "otso," the route takes the field through a virtual figure 8 course starting with a descent through Marcos Highway, a climb through Naguilian, another downhill run on Marcos Highway and another climb, this time through Kennon Road.

Primero said he would give it his best shot, knowing that the coming stages could either make or break his chances at the overall individual honor, which is worth P200,000.

Today's lap will test the 35-year-old legs of Domingo, who have already blown two Tour championships by failing to keep up with the demands of the Baguio stages.

Tanguilig would also do better to consider the other riders in the top 10 of this event sponsored by Pharex, Isuzu, Gatorade, Red Bull, Lactovitale and Summit and Elixir Bikeshop.

Beer na Beer third man Joel Calderon, the Guimba, Nueva Ecija rider who won the 8th stage, is just 2:06 behind in fourth place, while his rookie teammate Tomas Martinez is fifth, 7:58 away from the overall leader.

Postmen's Joseph Millanes is also a real threat at No. 6 with a 10:24 deficit and Metro Drug's Ronald Gorantes, last year's Eagle of the Mountain, is 10:27 off Tanguilig at seventh place.

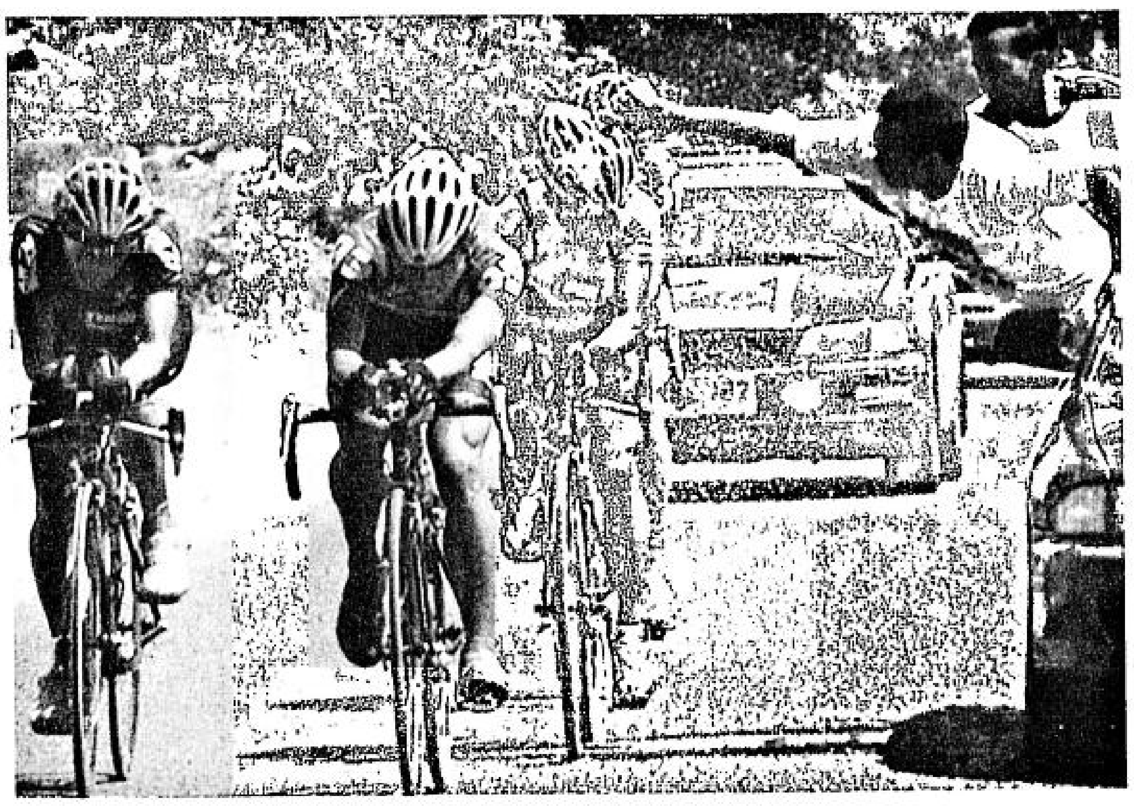
Philippine team mainstay and mountain bike specialist Eboy Quiñones, who held the yellow jersey in Stage 3, is eighth, 11:36 behind. Three-day overall leader Frederick Feliciano trails by 13:45 and two-time champion Renato Dolosa holds 10th, just 14:04 away.

"I need to make some carbo-loading today, it's all about the food we eat," said the 25-year-old Tanguilig, whose team served him spaghetti with meat balls on top of three cups of rice for lunch and dinner yesterday.

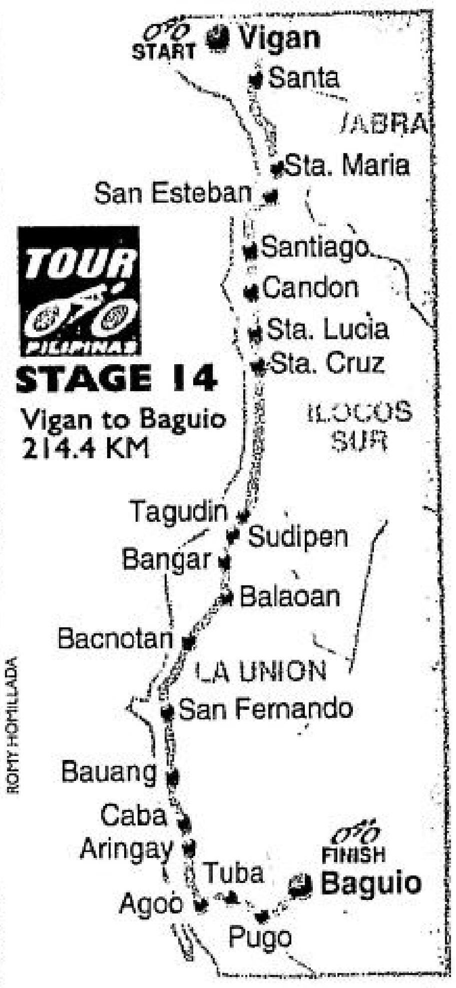
The Postmen held on to the overall lead in the team race which stakes a cool million to the winner. Domingo's squad is protecting a 13:06 lead over Beer na Beer.

Postmen coach Ricarlito Balmes said there's no way other teams can overtake them going up to Baguio. Aside from Domingo and Joseph Millanes, the Postmen also boast Lloyd Reynante, the current leader in the overall King of the Mountain contest.

From Baguio, the Tour goes down to Tarlac on Saturday. The last stage on Sunday will take the riders through Manila's prime tourist spots before ending at the Rizal Park.


ROMY HOMILLADA

POSTMEN coach Recarlito Balmes pours water on Lloyd Reynante in Sto Domingo, Ilocos Sur.



STAGE 13 RESULTS

TEAM TIME TRIAL

1. Dole 1:50:18.93; 2. Postmen 1:50:38.18; 3. Beer na Beer 1:51:12; 4. Purefoods 1:51:27.30; 5. Mail and More 1:52:50.32; 6. Tanduay 1:52:55.64; 7. Metro Drug 1:53:01.55; 8. PLDT 1:54:33.60; 9. Patrol 117 1:54:46.35; 10. Marsman Drysdale 1:55:11.91; 11. Samsung 1:55:21.07; 12. Vat Riders 1:56:16.08

TEAM STANDINGS

1. Postmen 153:34:52.52; 2. Beer na Beer 13:06.57 behind; 3. Dole 24:52 behind; 4. Purefoods 30:15.36 behind; 5. Metro Drug 44:59.11 behind; 6. Mail and More 46:39.69 behind; 7. Vat Riders 1:04:02.15 behind; 8. Samsung 1:04:03.03 behind; 9. Tanduay 1:09:15.84 behind; 10. PLDT 1:22:25.64 behind; 11. Marsman Drysdale 1:30:45.97 behind; 12. Patrol 117 (1:47:50.95 behind)

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

1. Cagas, D. (Dole) 1:50.18
2. Primero, A. (Dole) same
3. Villanueva, O. (Dole) same
4. Ramos, M. (Dole) 12 secs. behind
5. Millanes, J. (Postmen) 19 secs. behind
6. Reynante, L. (Postmen) same
7. Domingo, E. (Postmen) same
8. Hardin, D. (Postmen) same
9. Martinez, T. (Beer na Beer) 53 secs. behind
10. Calderon, J. (Beer na Beer) same
11. Jazul, C. (Beer na Beer) same
12. Espiritu, V. (Beer na Beer) same
13. Benito, Stalin (Purefoods) 1:08 behind
14. Talaver, J. (Purefoods) same
15. Davadilla, W. (Purefoods) same

OVERALL STANDINGS
(continuation)

11. Reynante, L. (Postmen) 16:49 behind
12. Ganigan, D. (Vat Riders) 17:04 behind
13. Barnachea, S. (Mail and More) 18:10 behind
14. Ravina, B. (Vat Riders) 18:19
15. Atilano, L. (Mail and More) 19:16
16. Navarro, R. (Tanduay) 20 mins. behind
17. Davadilla, W. (Purefoods) 21:25 behind
18. Espiritu, V. (Beer na Beer) 23:11 behind
19. Baluyut, V. (Samsung) 23:22 behind
20. Villanueva, O. (Dole) 26:09 behind
21. Benito, S. (Purefoods) 31:24 behind
22. Marcelo, A. (Mail and More) 31:58 behind
23. Obosa, E. (Samsung) 35:29 behind
24. Jazul, C. (Beer na Beer) 39:10 behind
25. Dasalla, J. (PLDT) 40:49 behind

Mariano nears GM title

DUBAI—Filipino International Master Nelson Mariano II beat GM Shukrat Safin of Uzbekistan Tuesday to tally 5.5 points and clinch a Grandmaster result in the final round of the $40,000 Dubai Open Chess Championship here.

"He (Safin) used my favorite line," Mariano said. Safin tried to close the position but Mariano returned the exchange on the 39th move to reach a won endgame of same colored bishops and force resignation on the 42nd move.

The four RP entries in this event were supported by the Philippine Sports Commission and private donors, including National Chess Federation of the Philippine chair Andres Gatmaitan, NCFP executive committee member Boojie Lim and FIDE Ratings Administrator Casto Abundo.

Armyman Mariano beat three GMs and drew with three, including eventual tournament winner Shariyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan, the former World Junior champion.

"My most difficult game was against Mamedyarov, specially since I missed a win against him," said Mariano, who scored a performance rating of 2613 to achieve the GM result.

This was confirmed by Abundo, the tournament's Chief Arbiter and NCFP executive director.

Abundo also arranged the participation of GM Bong Villamayor and IM Barlo Nadera.

The tournament also produced the world's youngest Grandmaster, 13-year-old Magnus Carlsen of Norway.

Joey loses, but Cavite-Tagaytay wins

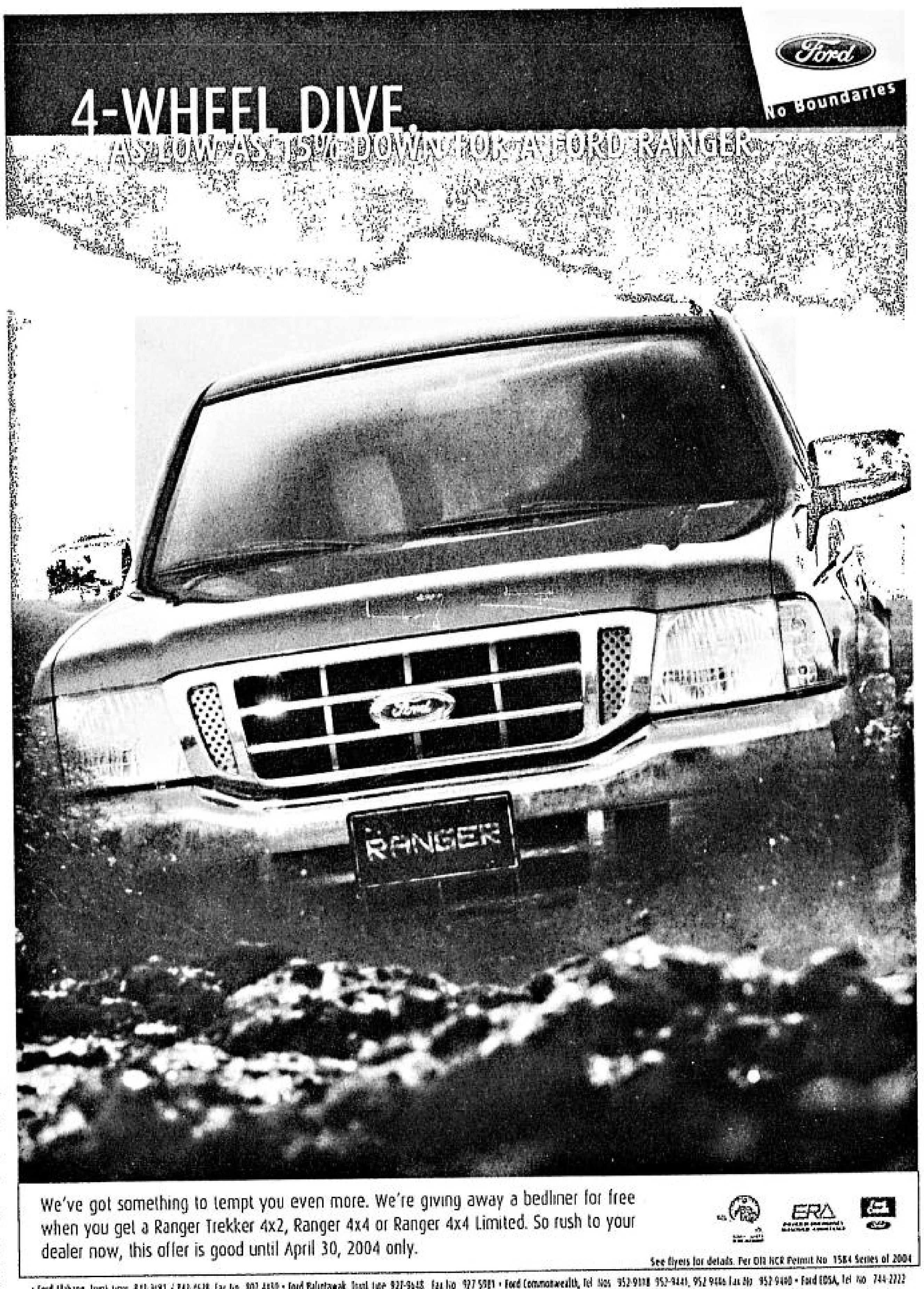
PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, PALAWAN—International Master Jayson Gonzales of Palawan A stunned GM Joey Antonio on board 1, but it went for naught as Antonio's Cavite-Tagaytay team scored a 3-1 victory Wednesday in the second round of the 2004 National Inter-Provincial Chess Team Championships at the Provincial Capitol here.

NM Rolly Martinez, Jerome Bolico and Edmundo Gatus, however, swayed the balance for Cavite-Tagaytay with victories over their board counterparts.

Martinez beat FIDE Master Oliver Dimakiling after 34 moves of a Reti Opening; Balico nipped Trene Olmedo after 38 pushes of a Caro-Kann while Gatus smashed Bobby Laudez in 52 moves of a Ruy Lopez to give Cavite-Tagaytay a perfect 2 points.

Cavite-Tagaytay trounced Rizal, 3.5-0.5, in the opening round while Palawan A outplayed Palawan C, 3.5-0.5.

Defending champion Bataan, powered by GM Eugene Torre and NM Rolando Nolte, also has 2 points with Palawan-PN and Bulacan A (Raymond Pagdanganan) of IMs Mark Paragua and Ronald Dableo. Bulacan A blanked Misamis Oriental, 4-0, of NMs Levi Mercado and Roger Verganio. *NM Marlon Bernardino*



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Siot tallies 2nd victory for Ginebra

GAME TODAY (*Davao City*)
5:30 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Red Bull

By Musong Castillo, *Contributor*

HIS first win took a long time in coming.

And before anyone could ask when the next one would come, Siot Tanquingcen went through it in a breeze.

Torraye Braggs and Eric Menk got their double-doubles right in the first half and Barangay Ginebra assembled its first winning streak since the first week of the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Conference after humbling FedEx, 125-110, yesterday.

Braggs hit 22 of his 37 points in the first two quarters, Menk scattered 14 of his 18 in the same stretch and both had 10 rebounds as the Kings took the fight out of the Express with a strong second period to improve to 5-7.

The loss was the third straight for FedEx and the fourth in five games since coach Joe Lipa took over. The Express are now tied with idle Purefoods for last place at 3-9.

"I guess we caught two teams on bad-shooting nights," said Tanquingcen, downplaying the way he has beaten his last two foes, both by 15 points. "There's still a long way to go. The good thing is everyone's getting to know each other better."

Tanquincen last won two straight games when San Miguel, which he handled in an interim capacity in 2002, won four in a row in the Commissioner's Cup eliminations.

Ginebra has not won consecutive games since the tournament opened when it whipped Shell, 90-81 before dismantling Purefoods, 100-85.

From a shaky 25-21 lead, the Kings, who lost six straight prior to a 109-94 victory over Alaska last Thursday, scored 38 points in the second period to close out the half sitting on a 63-48 bubble.

FedEx doggedly tried to come back, but the best it could do was move within 97-108 after a charity split by Egay Billones.

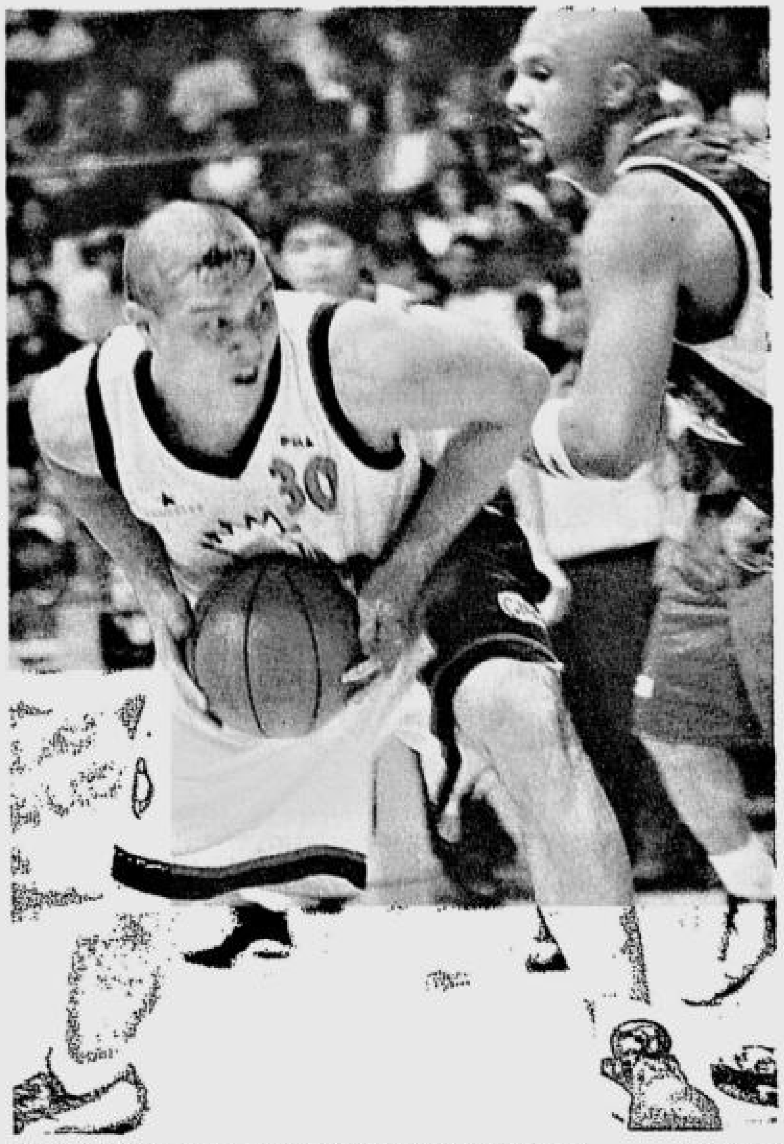
The scores:

First game:

GINEBRA 125—Braggs 37, Menk 18, Caguioa 14, Adducul 13, Seigle 11, Santos 10, Salvacion 9, David 6, Helterbrand 5, Noble 2, Dimaunahan 0.

FEDEX 110—Yap 22, Ritualo 20, Maddox 14, Ferriols 13, Meneses 12, Arboleda 8, Gonzales 7, Rodriguez 6, De Ocampo 5, Ejercito 2, Billones 1, Pingris 0.

Quarters: 25-21; 63-48; 95-82; 125-110.



MENK (left) tries to drive past Shell's Chris Jackson. PDI PHOTO

Viva, Welcoat eye wins

STREAKING Viva Mineral Water-FEU and Welcoat Paints try to bolster their bids for outright semifinal berths today when they go up against equally dangerous teams in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

A victory by Viva-FEU over Blu Star in their 4 p.m. tussle will further boost the bid of the Water Force to clinch one of the two automatic berths into the semis round.

Clashing in the opening game at 2 p.m. are Welcoat Paints and Toyota Otis-Letran with the Knights out to avenge their previous 69-76 loss to the Paint Master. *Trina Ibarle*

Macatangay pulls away by 8 strokes

LIPA CITY, Batangas—Terence Macatangay used his familiarity with the layout to the hilt in shooting a two-under-par 70 for an eight-stroke lead in boys Class A while Junior World-bound Allan Uy, Dottie Ardina and Cyna Rodriguez pulled away early in their respective divisions Tuesday at the start of the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course here.

Macatangay, playing out of La Salle-Lipa, had nines of 35-35 to pull ahead by eight over Gerard Arriola and Gabriel Villareal with Gabriel Atienza and Gio dela Paz 10 shots back in the 54-hole tourney also given major backing by the International Container Terminal Services Inc.

Guy ably faced the challenge of Korean Woo Kang-byung with his 80, giving him a two-shot advantage.

Ardina and Rodriguez, however, are poised for runaway victories in the event also supported by Philippine Airlines, Gonads and Unilever.

Ardina, seeking her fourth consecutive victory, stormed ahead by 16 with her 74 with Katya dela Cruz far behind at 90 while Rodriguez carded a 78 and put herself eight shots clear of Paulina Sotto.

In the other divisions, Jennifer Platon paced girls Class A, Francis Bawal led girls Class B, Rei. Gil Medestomas was on top in boys Class C and Allan Vincent Datingaling emerged the leader in boys Class D.

Bisera retains Julio Cup lead

By Jong Arcano

LONGSHOT Ramil Bisera kept his more illustrious rivals at bay with an even-par 72 yesterday to maintain his two-stroke lead halfway through the P1 million PGAP-Julio Cup championship at the Villamor Golf Club course.

On a testing day when the pins where placed in tricky spots on the bouncy greens, Bisera remained in focus to post a 36-hole total of 140 after firing a 68—which remained as the tournament's best round so far—in the first round.

Former Philippine Open champion Robert Pactolerin survived a woeful start to also shoot a 72 for a 142 total even as Cassius Casas also muscled his way into contention.

Melvin Eso carded a 72 for the second straight day and grabbed solo third at 144, bumping off Country Club Invitational champion Tony Lascuña, who could only submit a 75.

Casas, hit hard by a series of misfortunes that included missing the cut at the Country Club, got a reprieve after carding a 71 to be in fifth at 147 along with Lito Rempojo (76).

Making the day's biggest jump was Mars Pucay whose 70 sent him soaring to eighth at 148, one up on Roger Cabajar (78) and Juanito Pagunsan (79) in the tourney bankrolled by Korean patron Lee Sung Ho. Engineer Nelson Salazar is putting at stake a share at Buenavista Nature Park for an ace on the 17th.

Bisera has never won in his first 10 years as a pro. But with the way he's playing, he might just pull a big surprise.

Only the top 30 scores made it to the next two rounds. Among those who failed to make it by virtue of a countback were Rey Alo, Solomon Gines and Benjie Magada.

2nd round scores:

140--R. Bisera 68-72; 142--R. Pactolerin 70-72; 144--M. Eso 72-72; 145--T. Lascuña 70-75; 147--C. Casas 76-71, L. Rempojo 72-75; 148--R. Banares 72-76, M. Pucay 78-70; 149--R. Cabajar 71-78, J. Pagunsan 75-74, J. Pagunsan (am) 71-78; 150--A. Eso 75-75, E. Salvador 75-75, M. Bibat (am); 78-72; 151--R. Abaring 77-74, O. Sumcad 74-77, L. Barril; (am) 78-73, J. Bernis (am) 75-76

Samsung Amateur Tour kicks off May 4

THE COUNTRY'S top amateurs will be kept busy playing high-caliber, full-tournament events with several innovations introduced to the third season of the Samsung Amateur Tour which kicks off on May 4-7 at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

Seven courses all varying in character and in different parts of the national golf map will be hosting the elimination legs of the Tour. And in these legs will be an explosive showdown of the battle-scarred low-handicappers and scratch players who will be put to test with a 72-hole format.

"When there used to be a dearth of full 72-hole events that is really needed to train the so-called talents ready for national duty, I think the Samsung Amateur Tour will address that," said Tour organizer Boy Blue Ocampo.

Samsung Philippines chief Sang Youl Eom was all for the big change, saying that exposure stints for the crack amateurs and junior players belonging to the training pool of various exclusive clubs are really needed to get them into the next level and even the pro ranks.

The first two legs at Southwoods and Sta. Elena (June 1-4), for instance, will be a duel among the frontliners of the Southwoods and Canlubang stable of talents.

Out-of-town legs at Pueblo del Oro in Cagayan de Oro (July 1-4), Apo in Davao (August 19-22), Mt. Malarayat (Oct. 19-22), John Hay (Nov. 16-19) and Cebu Country Club (Dec. 14-17) are also expected to showcase the best regional talents at the moment.

For inquiries, please call the PSMG office at 635-0010 or 631-5768.

Where's Ateneo headed to?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I AM glad that Ateneo, carrying Lee Pipes this time in the PBL tournament, has finally nailed its first win on Tuesday after losing its first five games. It was a win that somehow lifted the morale of the team.

But after the short-lived euphoria comes this question: Where is Ateneo really headed to?

That is a question that keeps bugging the minds of Ateneo's alumni, who are this country's most rabid supporters when it comes to basketball backing.

First, Ateneo lost the 2003 UAAP crown when it was supposed to win it.

Second, Ateneo lost Joel Banal, its talented coach, who had to abide by the provisions of his contract to return to Talk 'N Text after the 2003 UAAP season.

Third, Ateneo lost its prized player, the extremely talented Rich Alvarez, to the PBA's Shell, thereby putting in jeopardy Ateneo's title aspirations in the UAAP this year.

I had followed Ateneo since Rich Alvarez hit town five years ago. Twice, Alvarez, whose father Rudy was a former FEU Tamaraw that I covered in the 70s, won the MVP award. Once, Ateneo won the UAAP crown—a culmination of a five-year program to resuscitate Ateneo's sagging image.

It began with Joe Lipa, the multi-faceted coach with the mercurial temper. It ended with Joel Banal, who reaped the fruits sown by Lipa with Ateneo's victory in 2002.

Joel Banal and his Blue Eagles were again seeded to retain the crown last year. Alas, Joel's younger brother, Koy Banal, came in the way and piloted the FEU Tamaraws to a rousing upset over the Blue Eagles before an unbelieving and a stunned Ateneo community that had conceived a huge party in anticipation of Ateneo's back-to-back victory.

It was sweet victory for Koy Banal, who won his first UAAP title.

But was it a bitter loss for Joel Banal?

I'd say no.

Before the championship game, Joel had known the feeling of how it was to win. What's one title not won—and his brother at that winning it anyway?

In a family affair, the sweetest feeling would always be reserved for the youngest.

Elders can sacrifice for the young but rarely are the young asked or duty-bound to sacrifice for their elders. That's a custom as universal as love, as timeless as debt of gratitude.

Still, it was sad enough that Joel Banal had to leave Ateneo a losing coach. It was sadder, though, to see Ateneo lose its crown at a time when the odds were heavily stacked in their favor.

Such is life.

Such is fate.

You can't win them all.

And while the Ateneo community was still smarting from the UAAP debacle, in came the news that Sandy Arespacochaga was picked to replace Joel Banal. Sandy has been a long-time assistant coach of the Blue Eagles, was the former head coach of the Eaglets.

Ateneo's grizzled pundits were stunned. They believed Sandy wasn't ripe yet for the job. Their fears were reinforced when Sandy's Lee Pipes-Ateneo stumbled into that five-game losing streak in the PBL.

I have no beef with Sandy. I couldn't even care less what the Ateneo leaders want to do with their team.

But then, there is this sentiment even among non-Ateneans about the move to appoint Sandy Arespacochaga to the post. And it's this: That Sandy has to fill in shoes much too big for him. He could be traumatized for life, who knows?

I don't know who was responsible for this but after Sandy's appointment came yet another shocker: Ateneo got BJ Manalo, the guy Ateneo lost to archrival La Salle some years back under a swirl of controversy.

BJ Manalo's re-entry robbed a legitimate Ateneo Blue Eagle of his rightful place in the Eagle rotation. What kind of values is Ateneo trying to impart now to its players: That it's just right to re-admit a deserter in the name of forgiveness? What's this, "The Passion of The Christ" all over again? Even Judas Iscariot forgot to ask for forgiveness before he hanged himself.

I am at a loss for words to describe my true feelings over all this. I wish Ateneo, the dream school of my grandson, Mayo, could resurrect itself from the pits that it is into right now.

***

FASTBREAK. My congratulations to my *kabaleyan*, Haridas Pascua, who won the recent Summer Active Non-Master Chess in Aspulan Café along Km. 3, La Trinidad, Benguet. Haridas, the 10-year-old whiz kid from Mangatarem, Pangasinan, swept the 5-round Swiss System to become the first player to win the event via a perfect score. I hope to someday shake his hand and wish him luck in the difficult sport that he has chosen to indulge in. Chess is a game not designed for the weak of heart.

SPORTSWATCH

Top seed reaches Toby's q'finals

TOP seed Jandrick de Castro routed Mikael Amoncio, 6-2, 6-1, yesterday to advance to the boys' 21-under quarterfinals of the Toby's-Philta Juniors Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. De Castro's victory sent him up against unseeded Arlou Soquino, who scored a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Lean Barraquias. In other matches, second seed Irwin de Guzman blasted Gerardo Reyes, 6-0, 6-0; third seed Russell Arcilla Jr. demolished Adzhar Al Ijiran, 6-0, 6-0; and sixth seed Ian de Guzman downed Isabelo Remandaban. In the boys' 16-under division, Jomar Sucaldito rallied past Eric Pepito, 6-2, 6-7, 6-4; Martin Ramos survived Jeffrey Calcita, 1-6, 6-4, 6-1; Rafael Espinosa conquered Angelo Patrimonio, 7-5, 6-2; Patrick Arevalo prevailed over Rommel Opiniano, 7-5, 6-2; Mark Balce downed Jeffrey Onate, 6-1, 6-3; Johnwill Baldonado beat Anthony Laplap, 6-4, 6-1; and Marlo Espedido trounced John Rey Capito, 6-0, 6-1, to join top seeds Daniel Luis Macalino, El Santo Santos, Russell Arcilla Jr., Pablo Olivarez II and James Murrell in the third round.

Veterans pace nat'l bowling meet

VETERAN duckpin bowlers Bert Sales of SODA and Remy Princesa of D'Friendly took early men's and ladies' (class A/B) singles lead in the ongoing 29th Grand and 10th Youth National championships at the Puyat Center in Farmers' Plaza, Quezon City. Sales tallied a two-game series of 443 to pace Boying Magday (435), Rene Capulan (427), Gerry Ancheta (413) and Jun Flores (412) while Princesa shot 384 to move ahead of Emma Nadura (382), Ruby Villamil (379), Ning Quijano (378) and Lorenz Hilaus (373). MDBC's Damaso Mabaylan and Kammadba's Rochelle Palma showed the way in the boys' and girls' competition, respectively. Mabaylan carded 354 to lead Franklin Dychinco (324), James Gregorio (312), Daniel Pangan (308) and Ryan Ramirez (305) while Palma submitted 343 to pull away from Raquel Palma (299), Majeek Aberin (298), Ann Aguado (293) and Maryjo Stephanie Lim (276). Sen. Robert Jaworski, former QC Mayor Mel Mathay and singer Dingdong Avanzado graced the opening ceremony last Saturday.

'Sagupaan' gets under way May 3

MORE than 100 fights are scheduled on Monday, May 3, when the much-awaited "Sagupaan sa Tag-Araw 3-Cock Derby" unfolds at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. Derby's hosts are Orea and Friends, Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola with Casino Filipino-Silahis as sponsor. Entry fee is P5,500 while minimum bet is P3,300. Aside from the guaranteed prize of P300,000, the fastest kill champion will get a brand new motorcycle; second, six cu. ft. refrigerator; third, 21" color TV; fourth and fifth, one washing machine each. Participants are reminded to submit entries on Monday, May 2, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, contact 816-6750, 843-1746 and 843-1890. Among the participants are Paolo Carillo, Gel Alonte and Boy Magsanoc of Laguna, Dr. Boy Tuazon and A. Pineda of Pateros, Cyrus Hao of Bicol, Evelyn Caparros of Quezon Province, Rodel Vasquez of Mandaluyong, Arnel Geronga of Bulacan, Martin Tenoco and Inger Valdez of Cavite.

Pasay derby entries submission on

OFFICIAL entries must be submitted today in connection with Pasay City Cockpit's big-time 4-cock derby. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Entries will be accepted from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Participants may contact 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750 for details. The event starts at 4 p.m. tomorrow with popular cocker Benjie Lim of Mandaluyong as host. Action starts at 4 p.m. featuring more than 70 fights. Lim was runner-up finisher in the recently concluded Bakbakan Open National 8-Cock Derby after his two entries (Banahaw and San Jose) tallied seven wins each. Aside from members of Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA), also seeing action tomorrow are *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, Tony Lasala, Pol Estrellado, Blandy Tolentino, UCAP president Raymond Velayo, William Go, Gerry Ramos, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza among others.

Albert Cup at Wack Wack west

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos and Rep. Neptali Gonzales Jr. will join Secretary Delia Domingo Albert in the ceremonial tee off at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow in the DFA Secretary Delia Domingo Albert Invitational Golf Cup 2004 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club's West Course. Some of the noted participants in the 18-hole tournament, supported by San Miguel Corp., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Pagcor, GSIS and Aliw Broadcasting Corp. (ABC), include Department of Transportation and Communication secretary Leandro Mendoza and Amb. Antonio Cabangon-Chua. DFA Undersecretary Rafael Sequis, overall chair of the organizing committee, said all the Philippine ambassadors are hole sponsors in the event.

Manzanares tops 76ers tourney golf

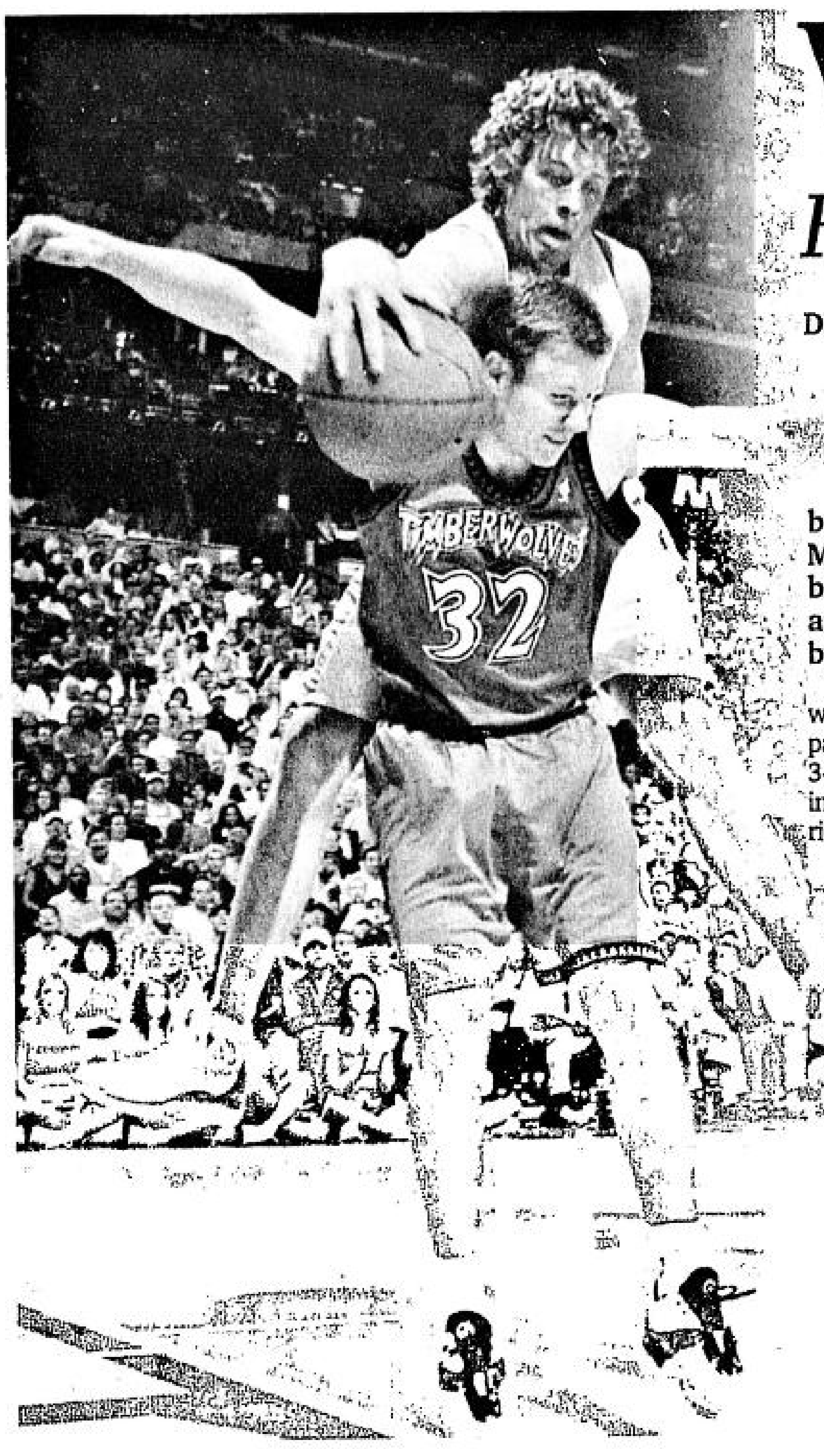
ED Manzanares fired a 74 for 49 points under the Molave scoring system to bag the overall championship in the recent 2nd 76ers Cup golf tournament at the Valley Golf and Country Club's Executive course in Antipolo City. Harry Paltongan ruled Class A over Vladimir Ponce de Leon, first runner-up, and lawyer Ignatius Rodriguez in the tournament, principally sponsored by Samsung and held for the benefit of Samar National High School. Alexander Acurantes beat Roberto Nazareno and Maximo Lopez for Class B honors, while Emil Loyola topped Class C over Dino Nolasco and Gerry Linsangan. Lawyer Plaridel J. Bohol II, president of SNS Class 1976 Foundation Inc. and tournament director, thanked the tournament's sponsors for their generosity.

DLS-Zobel hosts Football Fiesta

THE "1st De La Salle-Zobel Football Fiesta," organized by the DLSZ Parents Sports Development Foundation Inc., will happen on May 1 and 2 at the Zobel pitch in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City. From 7:30 a.m. till 5 p.m., boys and girls of various ages from schools and football clubs across Metro Manila will converge at Zobel to compete for trophies, medals, certificates and assorted prizes. The event blends serious football with football-related family games, parlor games and skills contests. It is supported by Wendys, Shakeys, Selecta, Casa Belrina Travel Consultants, Bai & Mig Party Favors and Adidas Alabang. Top officials from the NCR Football Association and the Philippine Football Federation are expected to grace the 'football fiesta'.

Wolves race to 3-1 lead

Hornets subdue Heat, level series at 2-2



CHRIS Andersen (rear) of Denver reaches over Fred Hoiberg (front) of Minnesota. AFP

DENVER, Colorado—Kevin Garnett scored 27 points and pulled down 14 rebounds here Tuesday as Minnesota moved to the brink of its first NBA Association playoff series triumph by beating Denver, 84-82.

The victory gave the Timberwolves, who have never advanced past the first round of the playoffs, a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven opening round Western Conference series.

And Garnett guaranteed Western top seed Minnesota would clinch the series by eliminating eighth-seeded Denver on their home court in game five Friday.

"We're going to close this thing out when we get home," Garnett said.

Garnett, whose NBA feats have been downplayed by his lack of playoff success, arrived at the arena three hours before the start for extra practice and the effort paid off on a night when the T-Wolves struggled.

"I was playing like crap," Garnett said. "I wasn't happy with my play at all. I wanted to play well from the giddyup."

Tuesday's other NBA playoff game saw New Orleans down visiting Miami, 96-85, to level their first-round series at 2-2. Game five is Friday at Miami.

New Orleans guard Baron Davis scored 23 points and passed out 10 assists, sparking a fourth-quarter rally that lifted the Hornets to victory.

Denver made a late rally as well, but their comeback fell short. The Nuggets trimmed Minnesota's lead to 81-80 but Latrell Sprewell sank a 3-pointer to lift the Timberwolves ahead, 84-80.

Denver's Earl Boykins jammed in a dunk to pull Denver within 84-82 and Sprewell missed two free throws to give Denver one final possession with a chance to win. But two desperation shots sailed well wide and Minnesota won.

Sprewell exchanged yells with rival players and insults with opposing fans as he departed the arena.

At New Orleans, a noticiably limping Davis ignored the pain from ankle, back and elbow injuries to bounce back after making just 15-of-49 shots in the first three games of the series.

Meanwhile, Shaquille O'Neal shook his head, frowned slightly and shrugged when asked whether he'll play at the Athens Olympics. "I'm still not sure," the Los Angeles Lakers' center said. *AP, AFP*

Spring-SP7 dribblers bounce back

CAGAYAN DE ORO—Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo and host Cagayan de Oro split their first two games in the Panasonic-CdO Friendship Cup basketball series at the Xavier University gym here. The Spring-SP7 Lakers of shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino bounced back with an 89-79 victory Tuesday after dropping a close 77-81 decision to Andy Calingin's Stars Monday.

The two teams were scheduled to play anew yesterday in Claveria, Misamis Oriental with Mayor Rocky Calingin as host. Today, they wrap up the four-game series with a game hosted by Mayor Jose Galario Jr. in Valencia City, Bukidnon.

Pastors shine in Asian F3

BROTHERS Enzo and Don Pastor bucked misfortunes to save crucial points in the first leg of the Asian Formula 3 and Formula Toyota Series last Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.

Enzo, 22, driving in the International Class, steered his Dallara F302 Tom's Toyota to fifth place in both races despite having the wrong gear ratios in his car and replacing a punctured tire. Both races were won by Australian Christian Jones.

"The car just arrived from Macau last Thursday and it was only on Friday that I was able to practice with it," said Enzo, the 2002 Asian Formula Renault champion.

Don, 18, meanwhile, took his older Dallara F398 Tom's Toyota to fourth place in both races of the Promotions Class. Both Promotional class races were won by Tyson Sy.

The Pastors are carrying the colors of Fujitsu Ten Toyota-Team Tom's Petroc TEC Pilipinas in the event sponsored by the Department of Tourism, Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp., Petron, Boysen and McGills Paints.

It was Don's first stint in a Formula 3 car, which is much faster and agile than the Formula BMW, which he drove last year.

"I haven't had much seat time in the F3 car and I'm just getting used to the absence of a telemetry system similar to that of the FBMW, which makes setting up much easier," said Don.

Don is now fourth in both the AF3 Promotional Class and the newly organized Philippine National Formula 3 Series.

Lady Team T.E.C. driver and 2004 Formula BMW scholarship recipient Gabby de la Merced, 21, finished second in both rounds of the first leg of the Formula Toyota Cup following tight battles with Sy, who went on to win both races.

Team T.E.C. principal Tom Pastor is optimistic of their chances in the next leg, which is scheduled for May 30 at the Subic Int'l Racewa.

Rookie passes Touring Car test

AGUILAR

ROOKIE hotshot Christian Aguilar of the Havoline Racing Team passed his initial test with flying colors by posting two 2nd runner-up finishes in the novice event of the National Touring Car Championships at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Maligaya, Rosario, Batangas.

Aguilar, son of last year's back-to-back Subic and Batangas champion Oscar Aguilar, placed 2nd runner-up in both the morning and afternoon novice races to rank a fighting third in the National Junior Touring Car Championship.

He clocked a 26:48.930 in the final heat.

As team captain of the Havoline Racing Team, the elder Aguilar instead kept himself busy giving out instructions to his team members, most especially Christian, who is competing in the event where his father was the champion last year.

Tyson Sy, who is also being backed by the Havoline squad, meanwhile, scored two wins in the Formula Toyota race.

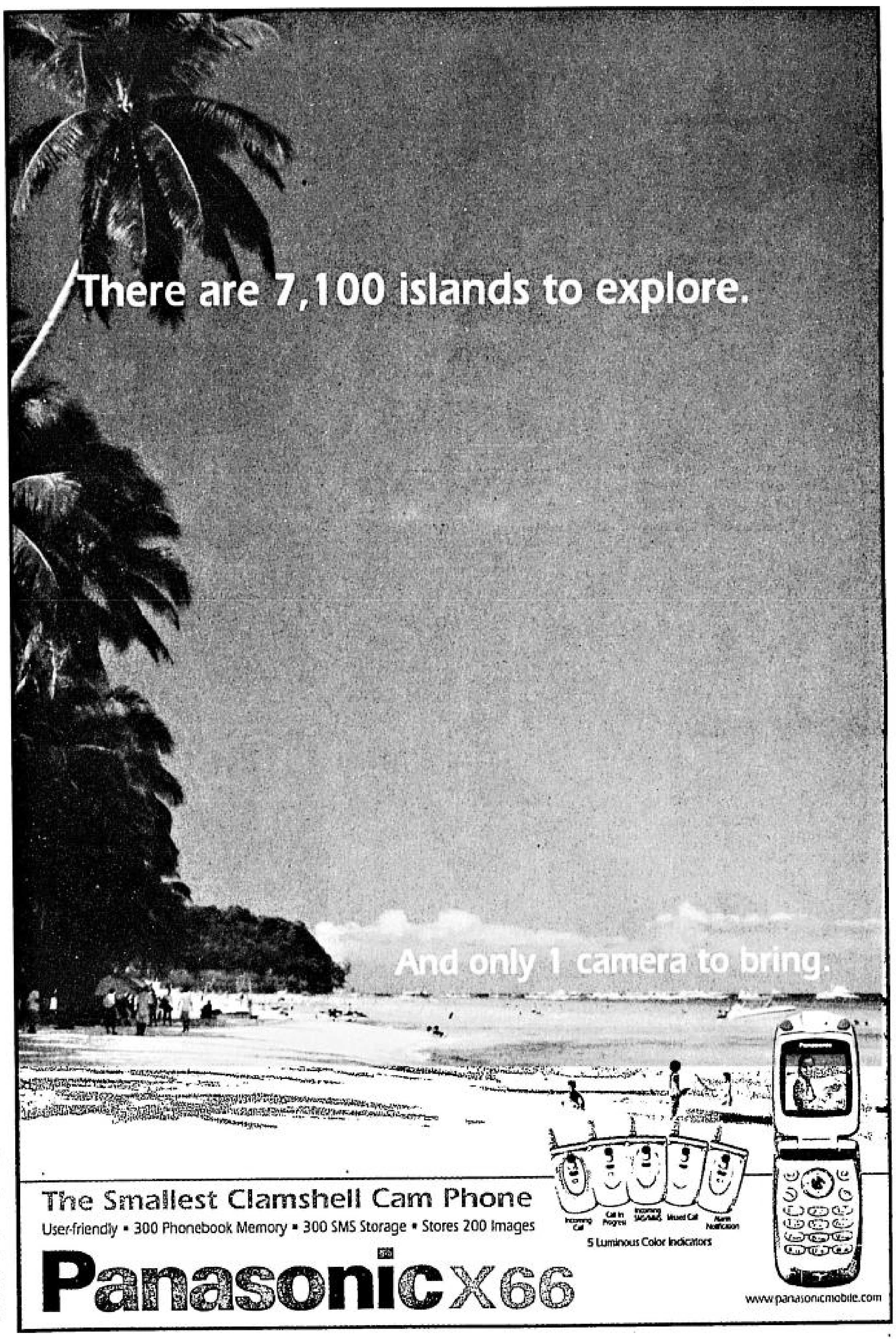
Other members of the Havoline team, which is powered by Vortex Gold and supported by Rota Wheels, Brembo Brakes, Hyper Parts, Gatorz Eyewear, Gaspeed, Kolor Craft, Auto Trend, DZ Racing race and performance and Atoy Body Kits, are Nilo Pazcoquin and Dr. Peewee Mendiola.

Olongapo netter reaches semifinals

OLONGAPO—Local pride Nico Riego de Dios blasted Raymart Padigos, 6-0, 6-0, to arrange a semifinal match with Aramco's Faisal Mansour in the boys' 18-under division in the 2004 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop here at the Olongapo Tennis Club Tuesday.

Mansour ripped Gerry Dorado, 6-2, 6-2, then booked another last 4 seat in the boys' 16-under class after ousting France Rivero 6-1, 6-0, and towed Saudi Arabia-based teammates Ibrahim Nawwab, a 6-1, 6-0 victor past Justine Mendoza in the boys' 14-under; and Matthew Timoney, who downed Jeff Corpuz 6-1, 6-1 in the boys' 12-under group.

Riego de Dios and Mansour tangle in the upper bracket, while Surigao's Juv Alban and Levan Moncera meet in the lower half of the CTW-organized netfest celebrating Milo's 40 years in the Philippine consumer market with support from Wilson balls, Adidas and Sports Kids.



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Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphics Design
Aries Espinosa, Editor

Lose weight through yoga this summer

Excessive body weight imposes unnecessary strain on the body's various physiological systems

MANDARIN Oriental's Pure Yoga conducts a weight loss program under the direction of resident yoga instructor, Prakash Singh Bisht, from May 3 to 29.

The program aims to help its participants achieve a leaner and lighter figure through various yoga poses complemented by breathing and cleansing exercises. Among the additional benefits of yogic methods, when practiced correctly and diligently, include improved blood circulation, posture, muscle tone and flexibility, and eventually better overall physical and mental health.

"Excessive body weight imposes unnecessary strain on the body's various physiological systems, and doing vigorous exercises further stress the body", says Prakash who earned his diploma in yoga education from Kaivalyadhama G.S. College of Yoga and Cultural Synthesis, one of the leading yoga institutions in India. "While yoga tones your body, builds strength and makes you more supple, it also helps manage a host of ailments that are associated with obesity like heart diseases, hypertension, and diabetes," says Prakash.

Pure Yoga's weight loss therapy program will be implemented in two batches, the first from May 3 to 15, and the second from May 17 to 29. Offered at P2,500 per participant, a full course comprises seven hours spread out in six consecutive sessions (including a two-hour water cleansing on the third session). Time slots available are from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., or 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; or Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. A minimum of three and a maximum of 12 students will be admitted in each class. Enrollees will be accommodated on a first come- first serve basis.

The program is not advised for people who are pregnant, suffering from peptic ulcers or slip disc, or who have recently undergone surgery in the spine or abdomen.

For more information on Pure Yoga's weight loss program, please call 750 8888 extension 2105.

LOSE weight the yoga way. Get rid of excess weight at Pure Yoga's Weight Loss therapy conducted by Mandarin Oriental, Manila's yoga instructor, Prakash Singh Bisht 3 to 29 May. The program aims to help participants lose weight through various yoga poses complemented with breathing and cleansing exercises.

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www.marcopolohotels.com

Grand Regal Hotel Davao
J. P. Laurel St., Lanang, Davao City
Tel (382) 235-0888 / (382) 234-3858

Taal Vista Hotel
Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City
Tel. (046) 413-1000/Fax. (046) 413-1225

The Peninsula Manila Hotel
Cor. Ayala Ave. & Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 810-3456/ Fax 815-4825

Mandarin Oriental Manila
Paseo de Roxas cor. Makati Ave. Makati City
Tel. 750-8888
www.mandarinoriental.com

The Bellevue Manila
North Bridgeway, Northgate
Alabang, Muntinlupa
Tel. (632) 771-8181/ fax (632) 771-8282
www.thebellevue.com.ph

Garden Plaza Hotel & Suites
1030 Belen St., Paco, Manila
Tel. (632) 522-4835/ fax (632) 522-4840

Waterfront Hotel Lahug
1 Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City
Tel. (6332) 232-6888/Fax (6332)232-6880
www.waterfronthotels.net

Waterfront Hotel Mactan
1 Airport Road, Lapu Lapu City, 6015
Tel. (6332) 340-4888/fax (6332) 340-5693
www.waterfronthotels.net

Royal Mandaya Hotel
J. Palma Gil St. Davao City
Tel. (082) 225-8888/fax (082) 225-1888

Camp John Hay Manor
Loakan Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0231 to 50

City Travel Hotel
15 Kisad Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 445-0456 / Fax (074) 445-0457

Cooyeesan Hotel Plaza
Naguilian cor. Asin Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 447-8888 to 93/ (074) 447-8895 to 98
Fax. (074) 447-0494

Golden Pine Hotel and Restaurant
Intersection of Carino St. and Legarda
Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074)444-9970 to 71/740-8975/
Fax. (074) 446-0704
Email: goldenpineholte@skyinet.net

Somerset Salcedo, Makati
H.V. dela Costa St., cor. L.P. Levista St., Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City
Tel. 888-6668 Fax: 888-6655

Somerset Millennium, Makati
No. 104 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, 1229
Makati City
Tel. 888-0505 Fax: 812-7721

Somerset Olympia, Makati
No. 7912, Makati Ave., 1220 Makati City
Tel. 812-1010 Fax: 818-8254

Bellevue is also for the kids

THE BELLEVUE Hotel, recently entertained toddlers and preschoolers in its well-appointed halls when it opened its doors to the children of Toddlers Unlimited Learning Center, an ISO-certified school in the Alabang area.

The children learned through actual interaction when The Bellevue staff showed them how the hotel helps the community. A tour of the hotel facilities gave the children a better understanding of service-oriented establishments.

"The Bellevue has always been a child-friendly hotel. As we are prepared to meet the demands of traveling businessmen, we are equally challenged with pleasing kids of all ages. In this visit, I think that we were the ones who learned more from the kids and than they from us," says general manager Cyndy Tan-Jarabata.

The young ones were treated to delicious scones, muffins, tea sandwiches and croissants before they said goodbye to their newfound friends at The Bellevue. The hotel is a favorite playground of kids from Alabang, who splash about at the swimming pool and joins special events like the Easter egg hunts, Halloween costume parties and hearty Sunday brunch buffets. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

Thrice is nice at Dusit Hotel Nikko

THRICE is nice with Dusit Hotel Nikko's 333 promotion. Booking three nights in a row at affordable single or double occupancy rates will give you half the price on the third night.

From May 1 to September 30, deluxe room is US$90++ per night, executive club room for US$100++ and only US$130++ per night in a Landmark Suite.

The hotel pampers their guests availing of the Dusit 333 promo with a daily buffet at the Café restaurant, one complimentary pica-pica at Fiesta San Miguel restaurant (per room basis), 10% discount at all F&B outlets (except mini bar) and discount coupon at one of Makati's leading department stores.

And while staying at Dusit Hotel Nikko, explore the hotel's cuisine.

Dusit Hotel Nikko offers wide choices from the best Asian and continental dishes. It takes pride in its four fine dining restaurants offering culinary masterpieces from Vietnam, Thailand, Japan and the Philippines. These, along with a buffet of popular dishes from the west served at The Café.

There's the very Vietnamese Thien Duong, Fiesta San Miguel which boasts of its own microbrewery, the five flavors of Thai food at Benjarong Royal Thai Cuisine, Manila's favorite Japanese restaurant Benkay. For reservations, please call 867-3333.

In photo are the room sales and banquet sales team who recently completed their full-force sales blitz to corporate accounts.

Moms get star treatment at InterContinental Manila

INTERCONTINENTAL Manila offers relaxing room accommodation packagesand special dining treats for Mother's Day. The room packages are valid for the entire month of May 2004. Mom's Sweet Deal is priced at P 3,800 net for an overnight stay in a De Luxe Room and P 4,800 net for an overnight stay in an Executive Room. Both deals are inclusive of breakfast in bed for Mom, buffet lunch for Mom at Café Jeepney, complimentary foot spa and 15% discount on other services at Suriya Spa at InterContinental Manila and a discount voucher valid until June 30, 2004 entitling Mom to a 20% discount on selected ladies brands at Rustan's. Other perks are automatic room upgrade for a 2-night booking, a special rate of P 3,000 net per night for a second room, and 10% discount on Café Jeepney lunch or dinner buffets and Prince Albert Rotisserie food for the family plus a special gift for Mom at these outlets.

The Pamper Mom Package for only P 8,000 net consists of an overnight stay in a Club InterContinental De Luxe Room, Continental breakfast at the Club Lounge, pampering vouchers worth P 3,000 at the hotel's Kaffee Salon for hair care treatments, make-up services and hands and feet conditioning treatments and Suriya Spa for massage therapy, body and back treatments.

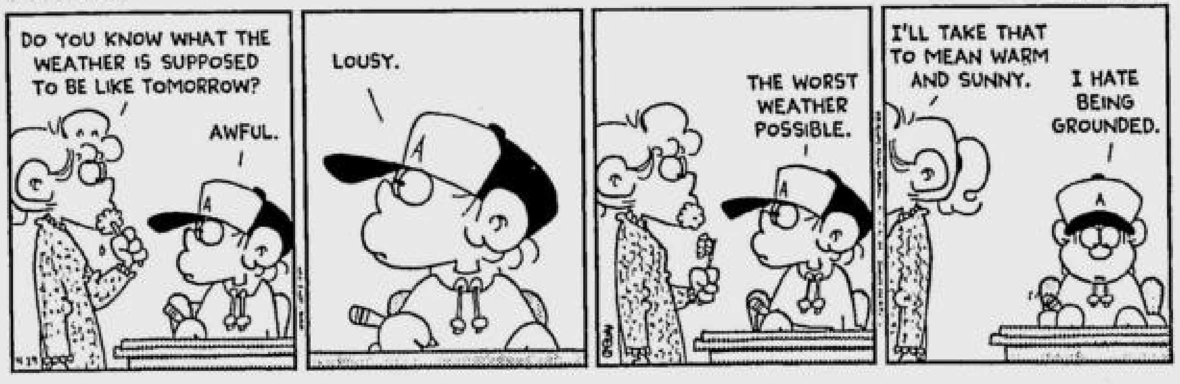
For both room packages, Mom will receive a special gift upon check-in. On Mother's Day, May 9, 2004, mothers who dine at Café Jeepney or at Prince Albert Rotisserie get to pick a prize. Prior reservations for lunch or dinner on Mother's day will be given a 15% discount.

When dining in the company of two other guests at any hotel restaurant outlet, mothers will get a free glass of Pomelo Cool, the drink of the month, and a huggy bear.

For inquiries or reservations call 815-9711 ext. 373 to 375 for rooms and ext. 262 for restaurants.

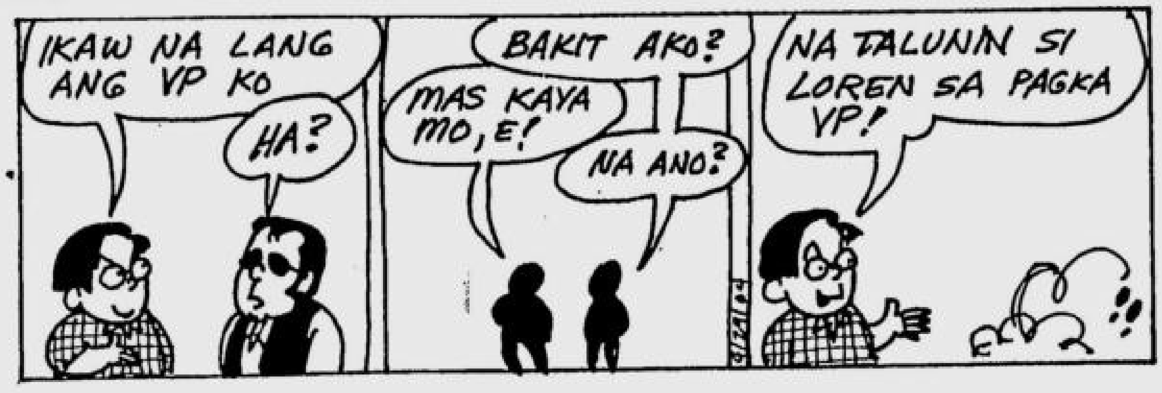
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE WEATHER IS SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE TOMORROW?
AWFUL.
LOUSY.
THE WORST WEATHER POSSIBLE.
I'LL TAKE THAT TO MEAN WARM AND SUNNY.
I HATE BEING GROUNDED.

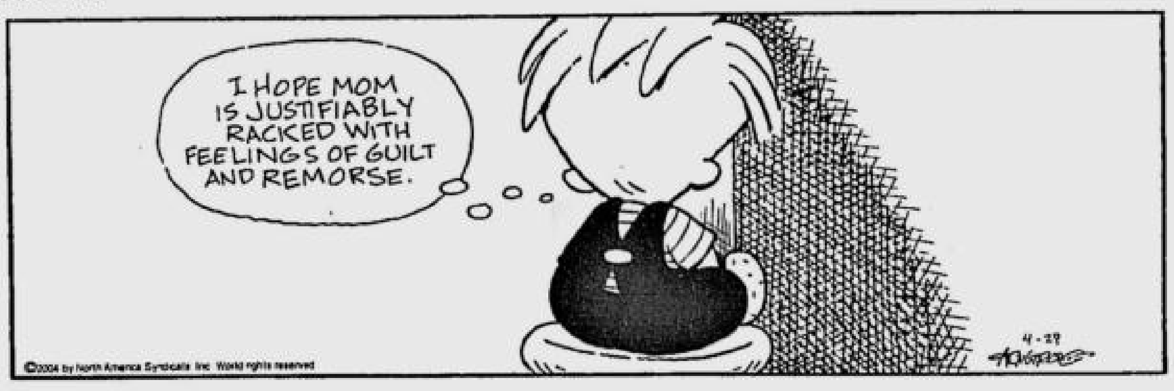
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


IKAW NA LANG ANG VP KO
HA?
BAKIT AKO?
MAS KAYA MO, E!
NA ANO?
NA TALUNIN SI LOREN SA PAGKA VP!

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I HOPE MOM IS JUSTIFIABLY RACKED WITH FEELINGS OF GUILT AND REMORSE.
4-29
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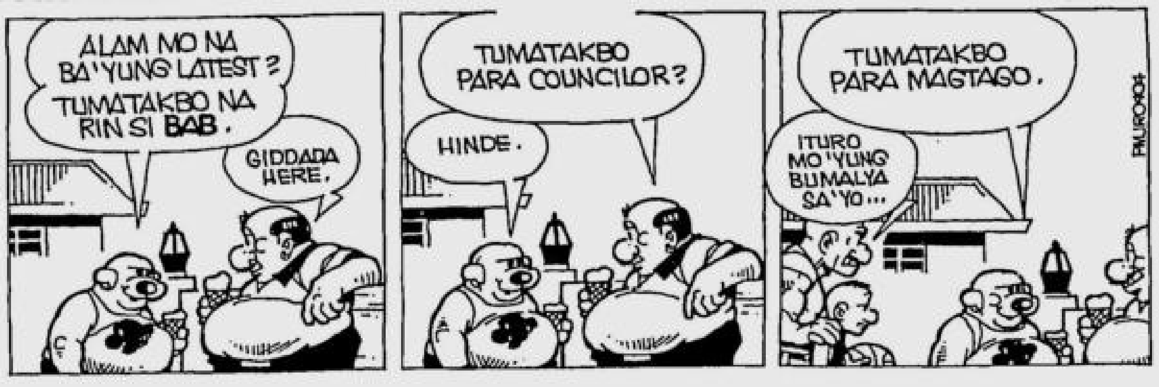
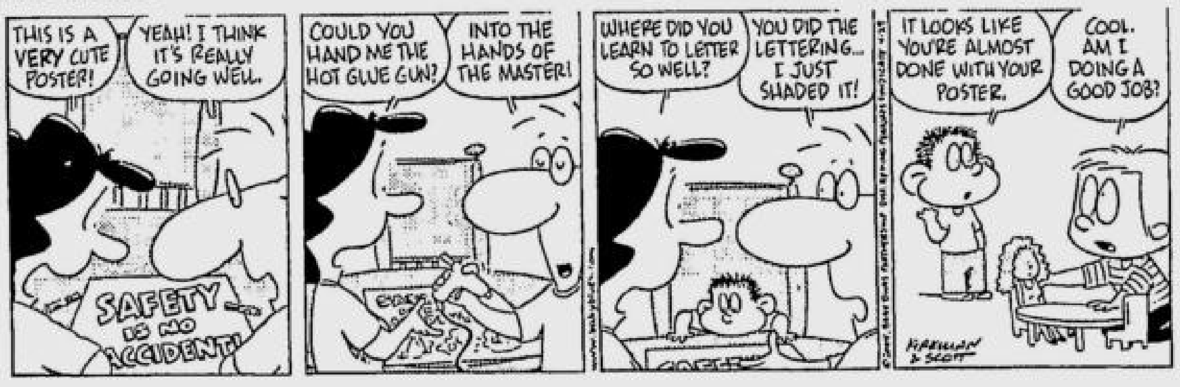
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO NA BA 'YUNG LATEST? TUMATAKBO NA RIN SI BAB.
GIDDADA HERE.
TUMATAKBO PARA COUNCILOR?
HINDE.
TUMATAKBO PARA MAGTAGO.
ITURO MO 'YUNG BUMALYA SA'YO...

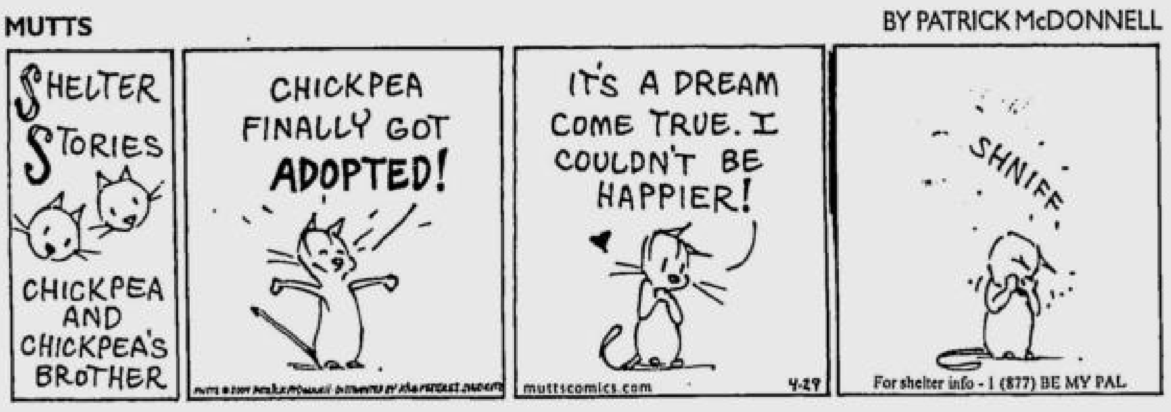
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THIS IS A VERY CUTE POSTER!
YEAH! I THINK IT'S REALLY GOING WELL.
SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT!
COULD YOU HAND ME THE HOT GLUE GUN?
INTO THE HANDS OF THE MASTER!
WHERE DID YOU LEARN TO LETTER SO WELL?
YOU DID THE LETTERING... I JUST SHADED IT!
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ALMOST DONE WITH YOUR POSTER.
COOL. AM I DOING A GOOD JOB?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

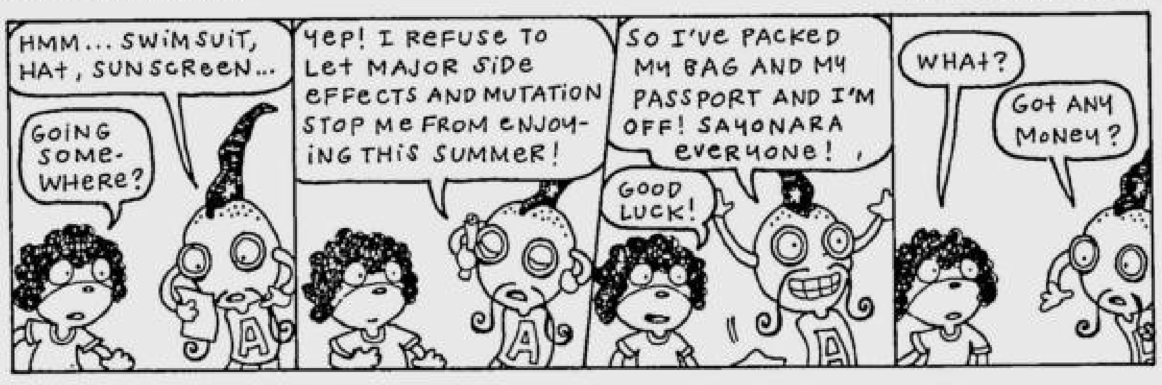
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHELTER STORIES
CHICKPEA AND CHICKPEA'S BROTHER
CHICKPEA FINALLY GOT ADOPTED!
IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE. I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER!
muttscomics.com
4-29
SHNIFF
For shelter info - 1 (877) BE MY PAL

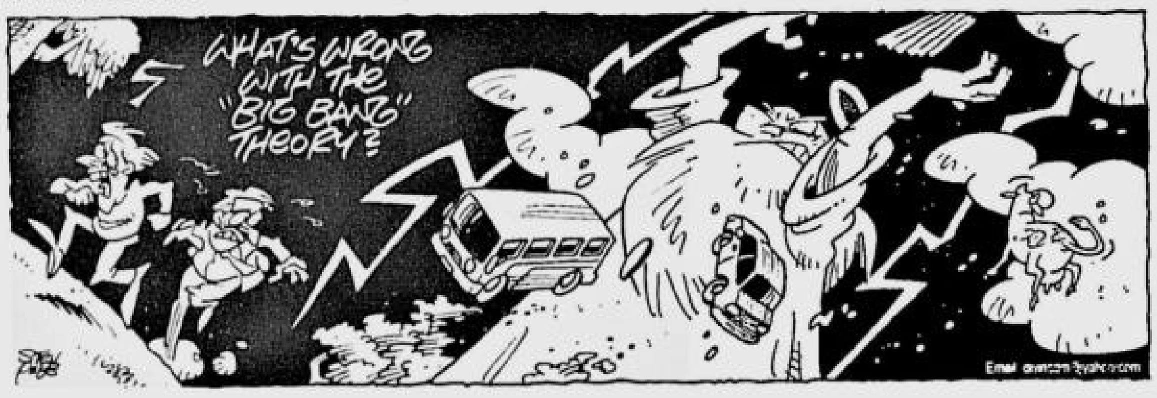
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HMM... SWIMSUIT, HAT, SUNSCREEN...
GOING SOMEWHERE?
YEP! I REFUSE TO LET MAJOR SIDE EFFECTS AND MUTATION STOP ME FROM ENJOYING THIS SUMMER!
SO I'VE PACKED MY BAG AND MY PASSPORT AND I'M OFF! SAYONARA EVERYONE!
GOOD LUCK!
WHAT?
GOT ANY MONEY?

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE "BIG BANG" THEORY?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very aware of the image you create in your social milieu. You don't let others down. You're responsible and reliable. You have a playful side that makes you socially popular (if you choose to be). Because of this, your friends and relatives love you. The year ahead presents interesting choices for you. You will know what to do.

Birthdate of: Daniel Day-Lewis, actor; Uma Thurman, actress; Michelle Pfeiffer, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Keep your ears open for ways to make money or to improve your job. This is definitely possible today. You have to believe in yourself and your own future.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): All kinds of fun possibilities exist today! New romance might begin. Plans for vacation are possible. Activities with children are likely. One thing is certain: You will enjoy yourself!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel generous toward a family member today. Generosity should begin at home, because it will be returned to you a hundredfold in the future.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a wonderful day to schmooze with friends and enjoy yourself chatting with everyone. People are upbeat and friendly. You're particularly witty and sociable right now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Marvelous opportunities await you today. You can definitely promote your good name. Look for ways to impress important people who, in turn, can help you in the future.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're eager for new experiences today. Do anything out of the ordinary: Try new activities; expand your mind; take a trip.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Feelings of mutual generosity abound today! Either you are very generous to someone or someone else is very generous to you. Either way, it's a win/win situation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You find it easy to see the bigger picture today. You see how you fit into the realm of things around you. Nothing is an accident; everything is interrelated.

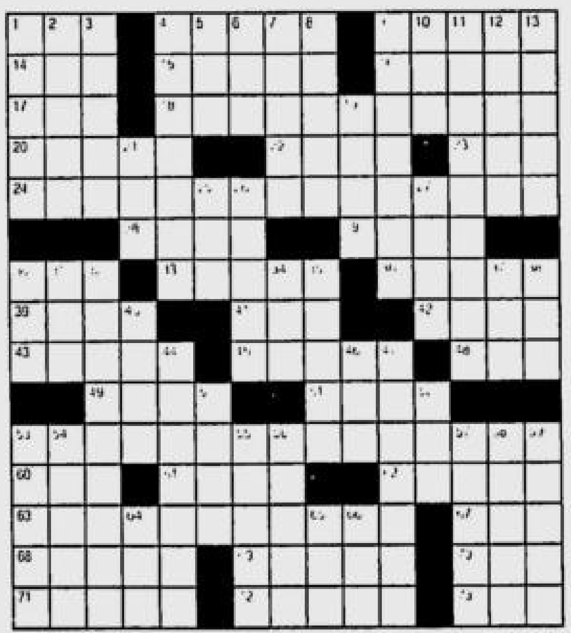
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a fabulous day to improve your job. Be open to any suggestion or method to do this. Lady Luck is with you today. You're a winner!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your enthusiasm and optimism attract people to you today. In a world filled with aggression, competition and negativity, you are a refreshing breath of air. People love you!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might get a tiny little gift today from someone. Inheritances, perks, favors or practical assistance comes your way at this time. Just say "thank you."

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent day for contracts and negotiations. You know that good business is mutually beneficial. You'll find that easy to achieve now.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

4/29/04

ACROSS
1 U.S. defense grp.
4 Indian nursemaids
9 Feats
14 Mom-and-pop org.
15 Three-stringed instrument
16 In the shadows
17 Rower
18 Start of a Mae West quip
20 University of Maine campus
22 '60s hairstyle
23 A fifth of MV
24 Part 2 of quip
28 Legal order
29 Coup d'__
30 Dickens
33 Tests
36 Long-billed shorebird
39 Tangy
41 Part 3 of quip
42 Do beaver's work
43 Patient
45 Smudge
48 Former name of Verizon
49 Get a hold on
51 Once again from the top
53 Part 4 of quip
60 Buddhist Thai
61 Flying toy
62 Accustom
63 End of quip
67 Brenda or Peggy
68 Alliance
69 Fatuous
70 Completion
71 Supports for sails
72 More sensible
73 Sunbeam

DOWN
1 Parody
2 Video-game name
3 Leslie of "An American in Paris"
4 Ornate wardrobe
5 __ culpa (Sorry 'bout that)
6 Condensed bk.
7 Location of the Great Mosque
8 Isaac Asimov's genre
9 Handmade canoes
10 Vane dir.
11 Drawing out
12 Dance music
13 Wood dye
19 Johnson of "Laugh-In"
21 Unused
25 Veto
26 Knifes
27 Sharp taste
30 "__ a bird..."
31 Sole scraper
32 Prediction
34 Speechless
35 Lieu
37 Serving of butter
38 She sheep
40 Neophyte: var.
44 Aments
46 Whatever
47 Smeller
50 Isle of Man man
52 Ton lead-in
53 Pelvic bone
54 Spiritual nourishment
55 Ornamental cases
56 Allstate alternative
57 Sovereign
58 Sphere
59 Indigent
64 Toddler
65 James Bond's Fleming
66 Individual

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

C	R	E	A	M	■	J	A	P	E	S	■	R	B	I
B	I	N	G	E	■	A	B	E	L	E	■	E	A	R
S	M	A	L	L	S	C	R	E	E	N	■	T	R	I
■	■	M	O	D	E	L	■	L	A	D	D	E	R	S
D	H	O	W	■	M	Y	N	A	■	■	E	L	I	E
O	A	R	■	T	I	N	Y	B	U	B	B	L	E	S
D	I	E	G	O	■	■	E	L	M	E	R	■	■	■
O	R	D	I	N	A	L	■	E	A	T	I	N	I	O
■	■	■	F	A	V	O	R	■	■	O	S	A	K	A
L	I	T	T	L	E	W	O	M	E	N	■	G	O	T
E	R	I	E	■	■	L	E	A	P	■	C	A	S	H
G	O	N	D	O	L	A	■	R	E	E	L	S	■	■
A	N	T	■	M	I	N	N	I	E	P	E	A	R	L
T	E	E	■	I	N	D	U	S	■	O	A	K	I	E
E	D	D	■	T	E	S	T	A	■	S	N	I	D	E

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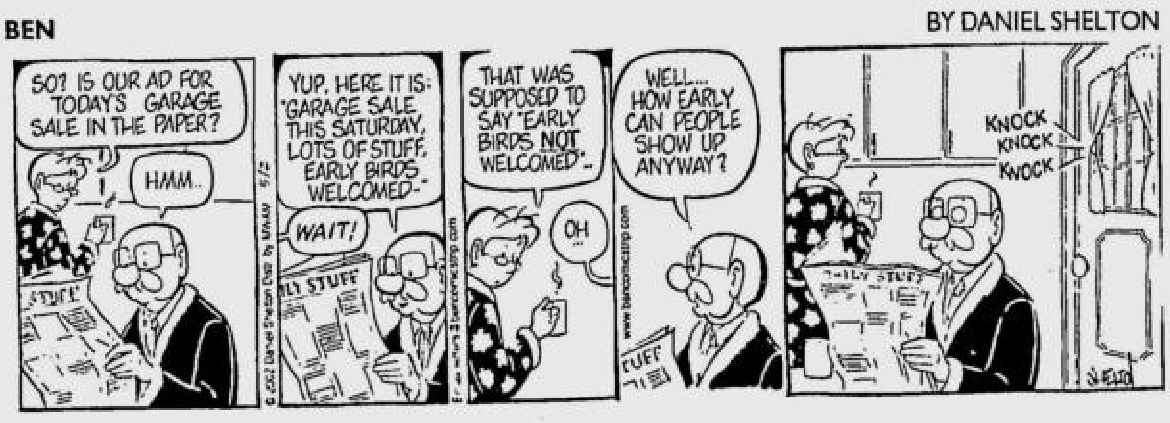
4/29/04

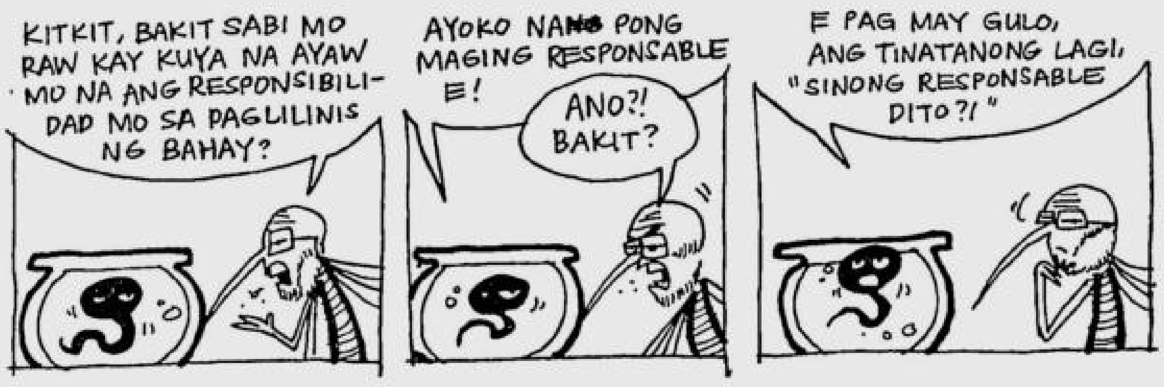
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO? IS OUR AD FOR TODAY'S GARAGE SALE IN THE PAPER?
HMM..
YUP. HERE IT IS: "GARAGE SALE THIS SATURDAY, LOTS OF STUFF, EARLY BIRDS WELCOMED-"
WAIT!
THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO SAY "EARLY BIRDS NOT WELCOMED"...
OH
WELL... HOW EARLY CAN PEOPLE SHOW UP ANYWAY?
www.bencomicstrip.com
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
DAILY STUFF

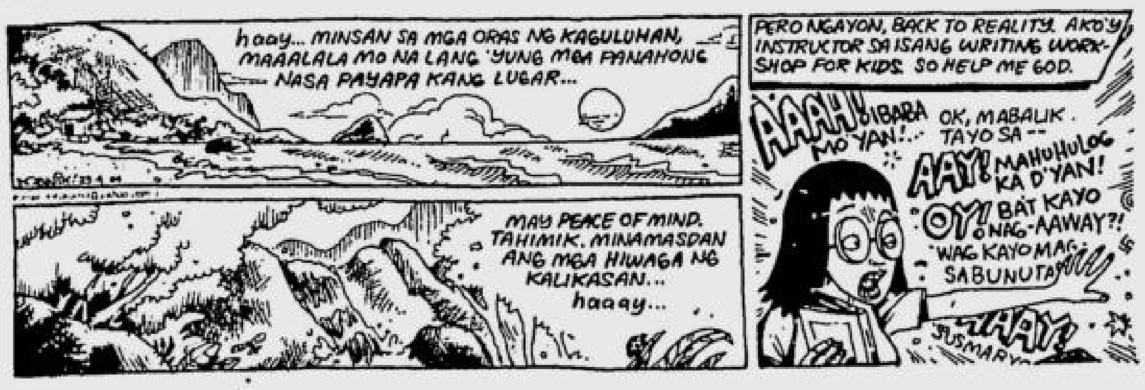
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KITKIT, BAKIT SABI MO RAW KAY KUYA NA AYAW MO NA ANG RESPONSIBILIDAD MO SA PAGLILINIS NG BAHAY?
AYOKO NA ~~HO~~ PONG MAGING RESPONSABLE E!
ANO?! BAKIT?
E PAG MAY GULO, ANG TINATANONG LAGI, "SINONG RESPONSABLE DITO?!"

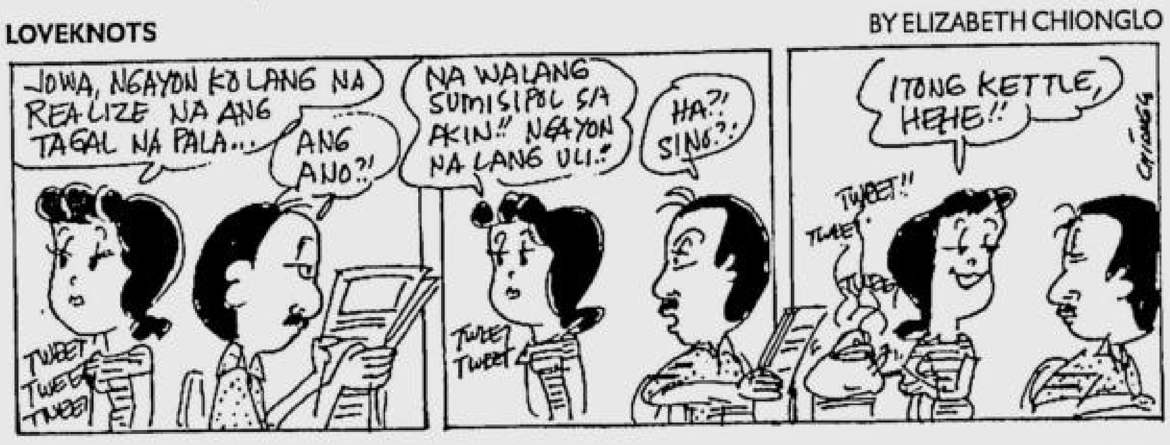
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


haay... MINSAN SA MGA ORAS NG KAGULUHAN, MAAALALA MO NA LANG 'YUNG MGA PANAHONG NASA PAYAPA KANG LUGAR...
MAY PEACE OF MIND. TAHIMIK. MINAMASDAN ANG MGA HIWAGA NG KALIKASAN... haaay...
PERO NGAYON, BACK TO REALITY. AKO'Y INSTRUKTOR SA ISANG WRITING WORKSHOP FOR KIDS. SO HELP ME GOD.
AAAH! DIBABA MO YAN!..
OK, MABALIK TAYO SA--
AAY! MAHUHULOG KA D'YAN!
OY! BAT KAYO NAG-AAWAY?!
'WAG KAYO MAG SABUNUTAN!
AAY!
JUSMARYA

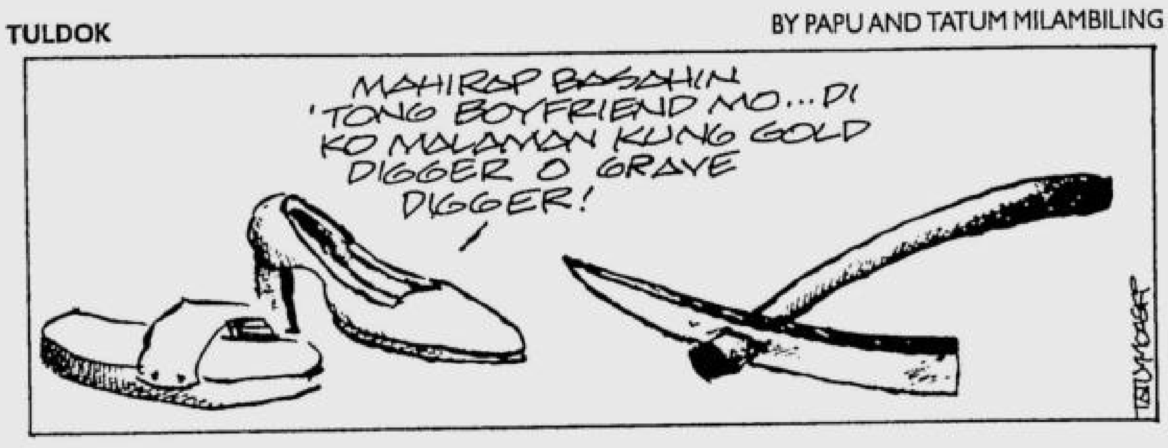
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, NGAYON KO LANG NA REALIZE NA ANG TAGAL NA PALA...
ANG ANO?!
TWEET TWEET TWEET
NA WALANG SUMISIPOL SA AKIN!! NGAYON NA LANG ULI.!
HA?! SINO?!
TWEET TWEET
ITONG KETTLE, HEHE!!
TWEET!! TWEET

TULDOK

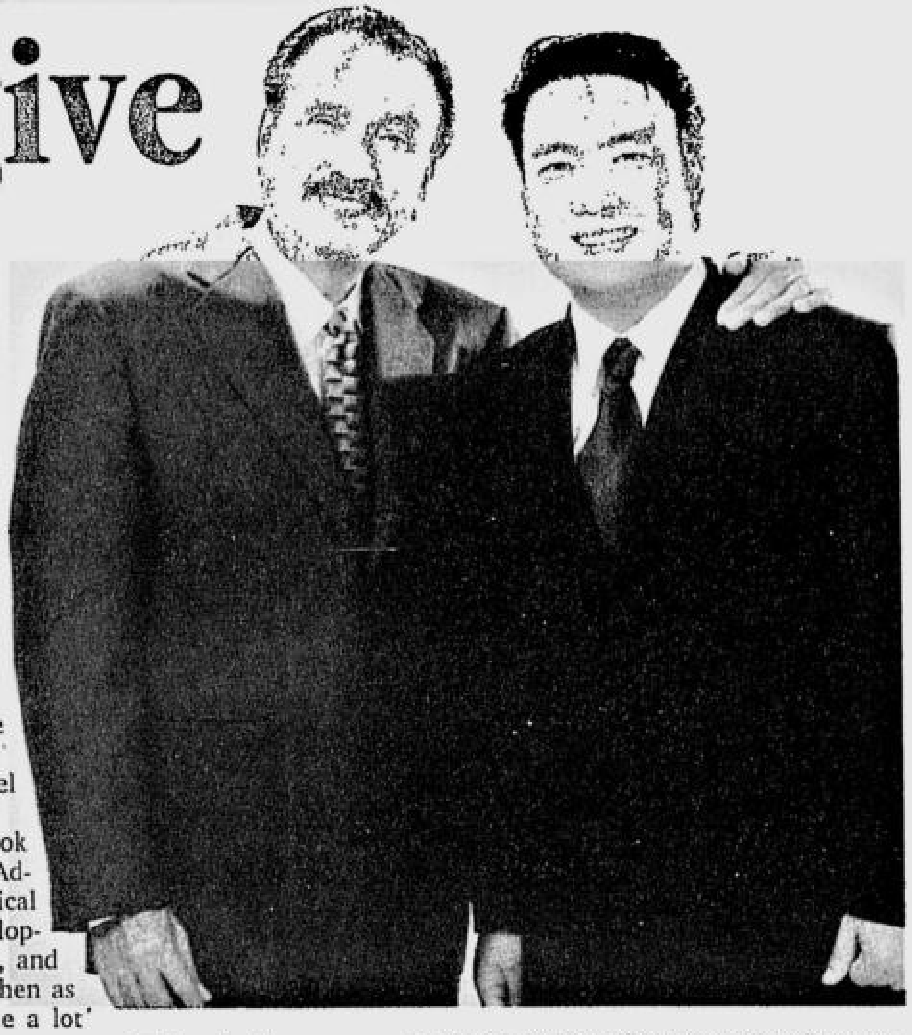
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MAHIRAP BASAHIN 'TONG BOYFRIEND MO... DI KO MALAMAN KUNG GOLD DIGGER O GRAVE DIGGER!

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino

Bong Revilla wants to give movie industry 3-year tax holiday



By Nini Valera

SENATORIAL candidate Bong Revilla wants to give the movie industry a three-year tax holiday to help it recover from the longest slump that it has been experiencing because of video piracy.

Revilla, an A-list actor, said he would craft a bill that would effect this vision for the industry that had created and lionized him. He said he wants to preserve the industry, the nation's culture and heritage, and promote the arts.

"If the government can give as much as seven years tax holiday as incentive to foreign investors, why can't we do it for an industry that is part of our life," Revilla pointed out.

He said he is still studying how this could be handled, and on which of the numerous taxes the holiday could be applied.

The industry is burdened with value added tax, regular income tax, tax on receipts, amusement tax, flat tax, and environmental tax, making it one of the most heavily taxed sectors of the economy.

Controversy

"Aside from piracy, the movie industry is crippled by these taxes," Revilla said. "Unfortunately, the government has not returned much to the industry."

Revilla warned that if nothing is done to help the movie industry, it would die within the next five years, depriving about 200,000 workers involved in the industry.

He said he is aware that his proposed tax break will surely cause controversy. But he assured the industry that he would see through this vision to the end.

But before he can do that, Revilla first has to get elected as senator.

Confusion arising from two senatorial candidates with the same nickname "Bong" might cause the actor some of his votes. The other Bong is bowling champion Bong Coo, who is running under Raul Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-asa.

"It would be best if those voting for me would write Revilla instead of just Bong, or write Bong Revilla," said the actor, who is the consistent topnotcher among the senatorial candidates in various surveys.

INQUIRER sources, however, say Bong Coo might withdraw from the race.

But Revilla can still not relax. He has tasted defeat in the last local elections when he ran for a second term as Cavite governor. The experience has kept him wary about running as senator, but he was eventually convinced to follow in his father's footsteps, Sen. Ramon Revilla.

Legacy

In fact, the older Revilla told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview that his son would continue what he had started in the senate. One of these is the revision of the 30-year old Philippine Labor Code, which he had been in the process of revising when ill health struck. He had wanted a "constant adjustment of wages" that would be more realistic to the cost of living, but which could be afforded by the employer.

The senior Revilla had also been working against contractualization, which effectively deters an employee's regularization in an organization and deprives him of benefits. He had also proposed the giving of health insurance and other benefits to employees.

The younger Revilla told INQUIRER Entertainment on Tuesday that he is committed to take care of his father's legacy in the political arena.

"If not for him," he said, "I wouldn't be where I am."

But how qualified is he for the job?

"I will not be running if I don't feel I can do the job," Revilla said.

"*Nakapaghanda naman tayo.* I took up a courses in Local Government Administration and Philippine Political and Legislative System at the Development Academy of the Philippines, and my experience as vice governor then as governor of Cavite has taught me a lot about governance," he stressed.

I love you platform

His platform can be summarized by the three letters ILY or I love you. I stands for intellectual property protection, L, local government development and Y, for youth empowerment and development.

Revilla cited his experiences as former head of the defunct Videogram and Regulatory Board. He stressed that more policies need to be enacted for the protection of intellectual properties and the promotion of local ideas and inventions.

He asserted that government must provide incentive to local thinkers to entice them to produce products that would boost the economy.

In the area of local government, Revilla, a former local government executive, said there is a need to amend the Local Government Code of 1991, especially its provisions on the devolution of services to local governments.

He said that over 60 percent of local government funds are spent just to maintain these devolved services and local funds could no longer sustain other equally important functions.

For the youth, Revilla proposed the study of the existing national curriculum to make it more competent.

"The ultimate goal is to breach the gap between obtaining an education from public schools and private institutions," said Revilla.

To do all this, Revilla is considering leaving the movies and focus on his political career.

"I have to be on my toes," he said. "People will be watching me on the job for sure. This is what I am expecting since I would be new and I still have to prove myself. But I will surprise everybody, including my father."

> 'The industry is burdened with value added tax, regular income tax, tax on receipts, amusement tax, flat tax, environmental tax'

Child stars grow up

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DON'T look now, but everybody's favorite adolescent, "Harry Potter" star **Daniel Radcliffe**, is growing up into an interestingly intense looker now that he's into his teens.

In the third installment of the Potter film series, "The Prisoner of Azkaban," looks dashingly troubled and anguished, hinting at the dramatic roles he'll probably essay as a young-adult actor. The way he's shooting up, that could happen in only a few years.

In "Azkaban," the teen actor's appearance and performance come cross as darker and edgier than in his first two screen outings, thanks to director **Alfonso Cuaron**'s moody handling and showcasing gambits.

Emma Watson, another Potter regular, is also coming along well. It's entirely possible that, in the next Potter sequel, she and Daniel could become a romantic item.—And, why not? Even young wizards and white witches have to grow up!

What about **Rupert Grint**, the third young actor in their endearing thespic troika? He too is looking less of a kid in "Azkaban," but is clearly meant for a career in comedy films. Hey, don't knock it—some of the top stars in the film biz are comedians!

Other child stars with a bright future in the movies have been introduced in P.J. Hogan's "Peter Pan." **Jeremy Sumpter** and **Rachel Hurd-Wood**, both 12 years old, play Peter and Wendy, respectively.

They come on as strongly and winningly in the fantasy film that there's little doubt that we'll be seeing them again on the silver screen, as teen stars.

Rachel is a particularly striking find, because she both looks great and acts with poise and verve.

Since Hogan's "Peter Pan" has more than a dozen other child actors, a number of them could also grow up into creditable teen actors in the future.

Other young actors talented and charismatic enough to enjoy decades-long careers are **Haley Joel Osment** and **Dakota Fanning**.

Osment, the child discovery showcased so memorably in the "The Sixth Sense," later scored another thespic hit in "A.I., Artificial Intelligence." Although he was cast as a robot, he was able to invest his role with great sensitivity and perception.

For her part, Fanning is only 10 years old, but she's already chalked up a number of attention-calling co-starrers on the big screen, the latest being "Man on Fire," where she plays a kidnap victim and **Denzel Washington** is the bodyguard who risks his own life to rescue her unscathed.

RADCLIFFE

Last year, Fanning scored a coup on TV when she played the central child character in a series on alien abduction.

Although the young actress does drama well, we think she'll make her mark as a young-adult performer in breezy romantic comedies, similar to the vehicles **Reese Witherspoon** is currently topbilling.

Andrea Bocelli

ALL ROADS lead to the Araneta Coliseum on April 30 for celebrated Italian tenor **Andrea Bocelli**'s Philippine concert debut. **Marcello Rota** will conduct an orchestra made up of Filipino musicians, and soprano **Maria Luigia Borsi** will also perform some numbers.

To honor Bocelli on his visit here, Universal Music Philippines is releasing his CDs—"Aria," the opera album; "Verdi," "Sacred Arias," "Sentimento" and "Cieli Di Toscana."

Bocelli is one of only a few artists who are able to perform both classical and popular pieces with success and distinction.

Diana Krall

IN HER latest album, "The Girl in the Other Room," **Diana Krall** reveals her talent as a songwriter. Six of the album's eight tracks were written by Krall and her husband, **Elvis Costello.**

Cuts include "Stop This World," "Temptation," "Black Crow," "Almost Blue," "Love Me Like A Man" and "I'm Pulling Through."

Feedback

FROM **Emily R. Suter** of Pasay City: "I hope our regulatory bodies can put a stop to the offensive songs now being played on the radio, with very suggestive lyrics that are shocking not only to children, but to adults as well.

"The radio stations should also police their own ranks, because they are supposed to provide entertainment and information, not offend their listeners."

How far will they go with their Belo treatment?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

THE CRÈME de la crème of Manila paid homage to Dr. **Vicky Belo** as she opened the newest branch of her esteemed Belo Medical Group at the 5th floor of Rustan's Makati. The Tantocos were around to welcome Dr. Belo as their very first in-house doctor. Butterflies were fluttering around when the hi-tech clinic was formally unveiled. Everybody was dressed in Hollywood glam style and the exquisite dining area looked like it came straight out of Vanity Fair magazine. Some of the celebrities who joined the fete were **Troy Montero** and **Aubrey Miles, Albert** and **Liezl Martinez, Ces Drilon, Miriam Quiambao** (who flew in from Hong Kong just for the affair), **Jaya, Ara Mina, Karylle, Celine Lopez, Tim Yap** and **Margie Moran**, to name a few.

The indefatigable **Tessa Prieto Valdes** hosted the event. She playfully coaxed the guests to reveal how far they have gone or will go with their Belo treatments. Everybody answered gamely. Ces admitted having botox done and having her eyebags removed.

Jaya and Miriam had armpit hair removal. Albert and Troy swear by Belo's quick tanning.

Margie keeps her Ms. Universe glow with Belo's Obagi skin care line. Liezl unabashedly said that she will have something done at BMG in a few days time, but she refused to say exactly what it is.

"Secret for now! Albert approves of it anyway!" Liezl said.

Once again, Dr. Belo is trailblazing. The Belo group has the first radio frequency apparatus for non-ablative rejuvenation. It's the same technology that **Oprah** has been raving about in her show. Dr. Belo basked in the love of her true friends.

She gushed, "I am all about love. Loving our bodies, ourselves and each other." Guests went home with all of Dr. Belo's favorite things—Bulgari perfume, Clarins beauty products, Essences bath stuff and Leonidas chocolates. The woman of the hour is definitely not just launching a new branch, but she's also opening a new chapter in her charmed life. She's too busy making her loyal clientele happy to be bothered by anything else. Judging from the turnout of guests that night Dr. Belo is here to stay. She has not only survived. She has prevailed! Others may throw stones at her and she may stumble upon them, but this woman chooses to build with them!

Just Asking

GUESS who this actor/TV host is, who swears to high heavens every time he is interviewed that he has no hidden agenda in helping a certain candidate campaign for president. He claims that his support is all for the love of the candidate. But when an insider cornered him off cam the actor admitted, "I won't waste my time if I'm not after a position. If he wins *dapat talaga may pwesto ako sa* government."

As I always say, don't believe everything you see on TV.

*****

Guess who this actor/politico is, who vows to eradicate drug addiction in his area. The funny thing is that a kin of his is hooked on cocaine. Shouldn't he sweep his own backyard first?

*****

Guess who this award-winning actor is, who refuses to take his shirt off during shootings even when it is required in the scene because he has this weird feeling that one of his breasts is bigger than the other. Some kind of paranoia? What a strange fellow!

*****

Could it be true that one of the reasons why **Desiree del Valle**'s ex-lover **Elaine** came out in the open is because Desiree has been concocting stories about her to potential clients for shows abroad? As a result, Elaine is having a hard time booking talents to perform in the US. Or is that just an excuse she is using in her desperation to win Desiree back?

*****

Miriam Quiambao is toying with the idea of coming up with her own workout video. She proudly exclaimed that she now has abs since she has been exercising rigorously while enjoying married bliss. Having a baby is not yet in the agenda. She laughs off rumors that her Italian hubby is not as wealthy as he projects to be.

"That cheap talk is so ridiculous. In the first place I didn't marry him for money. He doesn't have to flaunt anything at all. Now I can say that with foreigners you can be more of yourself. My husband lets me be. No offense meant to Pinoys. But maybe because of our culture mothers tend to pamper their sons that's why usually Pinoys are spoiled." This beauty queen's world revolves not just around her husband but also around a lot of other things that keep her blooming.

*****

William Martinez was my first boyfriend so I can't help but be saddened by the news about his drug dependence. Perhaps what's ailing William is that he can no longer recapture the lost glory of his matinee idol days. Knowing him, he has got a lot of charm and talent to be able to bounce back. But first he should ascertain whether he wants to be a comedian or a serious actor. If his brother Albert was able to make a successful comeback so can he. Or maybe if show biz is no longer kind to him then he should venture into another field. You can do it, "Walkman!"

*****

Guess who this young and very popular singer is, who is supposedly the current boytoy of a well-respected director. In show biz circles such liaisons are nothing new. I just wonder how the string of pretty young things linked to the singer will take it. He seems like an open-minded guy so I guess he's one who would just go with the flow.

MARTINEZ

*****

Could it be true that the real reason why **Jolo Revilla** and **Grace** (**Rosanna Roces**' daughter) split up is that Grace got jealous when Jolo spent Holy Week in Cebu without her? Perhaps, someday Grace will grow up to be as feisty as her mom, and jealousy attacks will be something alien to her.

For feedback e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

FPJ fan wants his reel idol OUT of politics

By Michael B. Jaucian
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—It would be better for the Filipino people if Fernando Poe Jr. would remain an actor and "Da King" of Philippines movies.

This is according to former movie actor and aikido master Omar "Boy" Camar, 64, of Barangay Caratagan, Pioduran, Albay, referring to his reel hero Fernando Poe Jr., who is aspiring to become the next president of the country.

"FPJ is a very accommodating and good person behind and on camera, but it would be better for him and for the Filipinos if he will remain an actor and 'Da King' of Philippine movies," said Camar, who has worked with Poe in the movie "Isla Puting Bato."

Camar, too, is seeking public office. He is running for board member of the 3rd district of Albay because, he says, he wants to promote sports development among the youth in the province as a way of keeping them away from prohibited drugs.

Camar had played the villain in the 1960s' movies of well-known actors like Eddie Rodriguez ("Kingpin"), Roberto Gonzales ("Walang Hari sa Akin"), Tony Ferrer ("Kung-fu Master"), Dante Rivero ("Tanikalang Dugo"), Dolphy ("Sato Wichy," a comedy-action movie), Ramon Revilla and Eddie Garcia ("Supremo"), Jun Aristorenas ("Elias, Basilio at Sisa," a Rajah Soliman awardee) and Poe ("Isla Puting Bato").

"I decided to run for public office because I would like to help keep the youth away from prohibited drugs, like shabu and marijuana, by keeping them busy in sports like aikido," Camar said.

Camar was the former aikido master instructor of the Presidential Security Guard of the late Pres. Ferdinand Marcos. He is now conducting aikido training for the country's future police officers at the Philippine National Police Academy in Silang, Cavite.

He recalled that he became an actor when Rodriguez offered him the role of a villain in his movie "Kingpin." He was 27 then. Rodriguez discovered him during an Asean exhibition in martial arts at the Araneta Coliseum.

Camar said he received only P1,500 as talent fee in every movie he made with superstars, but he said it was great and rewarding.

His directors and talent coordinators had also recommended him to do films with Hollywood stars, Camar said. The first international film he made was with Chuck Norris in "Missing In Action" in the 1980s, and the Japanese film "Golden Triangle," with renowned martial artist Shuji Karada.

Once he becomes a member of Albay provincial board, Camar wants to boost the fishing industry in the coastal town of Pioduran.

AN EVENING WITH BOCELLI
GLOBE Platinum subscribers will be among the chosen few who will get to experience the music of the world's greatest tenor, Andrea Bocelli, live on April 30 at the Araneta Coliseum. They will also be invited to an exclusive pre-performance cocktail hosted by Globe. Globe Platinum subscribers will also get a 25 percent discount when they purchase their concert tickets at the Lobby Shop of the Mandarin Oriental Manila.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ANIMAL
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ANIMAL
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-2	CHECK INN
CINEMA-3	TWISTED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-6	NIGHTMARE
CINEMA-7	ACACIA
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPARTAN
CINEMA-12	PETER PAN
CINEMA-14	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	PETER PAN
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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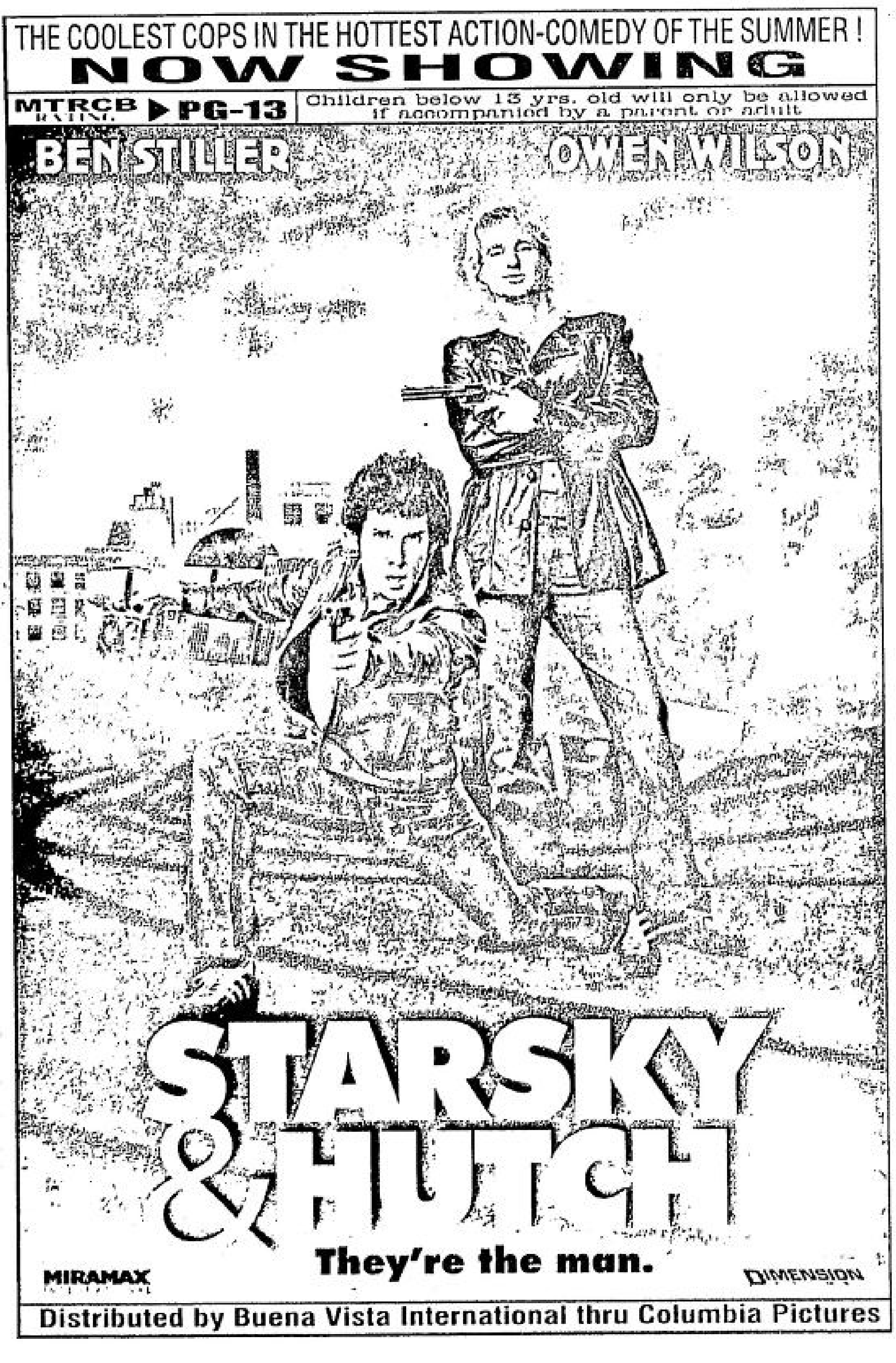
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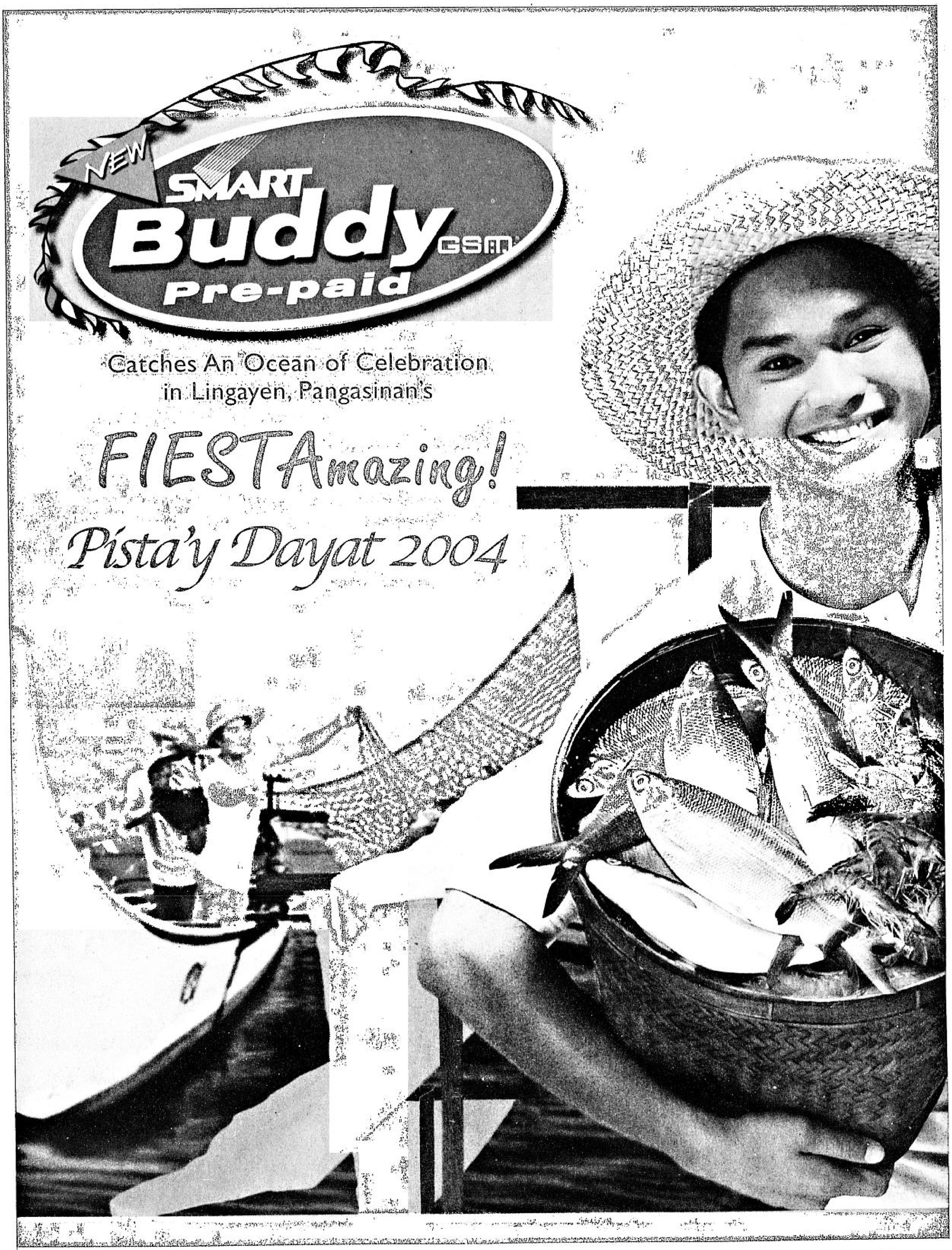
HERE TO PROTECT
HELLBOY
Hellboy-Movie.com
Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

More movies on pages B10 and B11.



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PISTA'Y DAYAT FESTIVAL

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE
Apr. 29	DRUM AND LYRE COMPETITION (Second category)	Capitol Plaza
Apr. 30	BUHAY SA BUHANGIN Sand Sculpting Competition	Beachfront
	SMART BUDDY FIESTAMAZING NIGHT (9:00 PM) **Featuring Brownman Revival**	**Capitol Grounds**
May 1	BANGKAROSA Float Parade Competition	Parade Route
	SAYAKSAK TAN GAYAGA ED DALAN Street Dancing Competition	Parade Route

BANGUS FESTIVAL

SMART Buddy Fiestamazing Night Concert
Venue: CSI The City Mall Parking Area
Date: May 1, 2004, Saturday 9:00 PM
Featuring Parokya ni Edgar

Bar Tie-Ups: *(until May 1, 2004)*
- Joshua Tree - *FREE beer for early SMART subscribers*
- Café Du Marc's - *FREE drink for early SMART subscribers*
- Music Warehouse - *FREE entrance for early SMART subscribers*
- Padi's Point

Pista'y Dayat 2004

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ADB sees 4.5-5.5% growth for RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank has projected that the Philippine economy would grow by 4.5-5.5 percent this year and in 2005, but warned of structural bottlenecks to higher and sustainable growth rates over the longer term.

"Although the economy has recorded growth of above 4 percent in three of the past four years, structural problems forestall any end to the boom-bust cycle that has afflicted it for the past two decades and that prevents it from moving to higher and sustained growth rates," the bank said in its annual publication Asian Development Outlook released yesterday.

For the country to take a more rapid growth path, the bank said the government must address the heavy fiscal deficit and consequent debt problem, poor investment climate, lack of capacity to generate employment and a high rate of population increase.

Some government initiatives—such as boosting housing loans and financial assistance to small and medium enterprises as well as the expected opening of a new terminal at Manila's international airport—were seen to create a positive impact. Aside from backlogs in physical infrastructure, other long-term issues identified were the need to upgrade technological capabilities and to flesh out an appropriate population management program.

The bank said that while consumer spending would buoy the country's growth over the next two years, the lack of foreign investment inflow, rising unemployment and rapid population growth would choke future expansion.

"Unless major economic and political reforms are accomplished, it will be extremely difficult for the country to lift its potential growth rate, which is about 5 percent now; or to escape the vicious circle where capital scarcity implies low incomes, low incomes imply a limited capacity to save, and limited savings lead to limited investment and capital scarcity," the report said.

While the ADB expected the country's growth in gross domestic product (GDP) to improve to an average of 5 percent this year and next year (from 4.5 percent in 2003) alongside the strong growth of developing Asia, it was the bank's lowest forecast for a Southeast Asian country next to Indonesia's 4.5 percent. *(See related story on page B5.)*

GDP refers to the total amount of goods and services produced in a given period and is regarded as the single most important indicator of economic performance.

The freefall in foreign direct investments to $319 million last year from $1.8 billion in 2002, the bank said, was largely due to political uncertainties that deterred investors from coming to the Philippines.

"Investors do not regard the country as competitive, in part because of a lack of good infrastructure, so foreign direct investment would seem to have been

ADB/B3

Mitsubishi makes RP hub for SUV production

By Abigail L. Ho

JAPANESE car giant Mitsubishi Motors Corp. has made a P10-billion infusion into its Philippine operations, making the country its production base in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) region for a new sport utility vehicle (SUV) model.

The project involves the production of more than 200,000 SUV units that will be exported over the next six to seven years.

Of the 200,000 units, two-thirds will go to Asean countries. The remaining units will be shipped to the Middle East, Africa and South America.

These exports are expected to generate about $200 million to $240 million in revenues for the country annually.

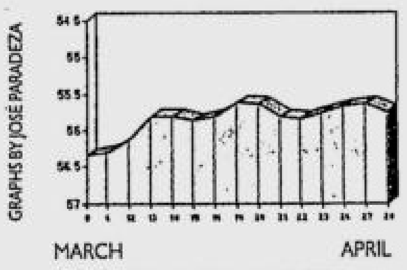
Of the P10-billion infusion, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. will be using around P2 billion for tooling, facilities and product development activities.

Company officials said the whole project was seen to result in local parts purchases worth P5.5 billion a year while employing 6,000 people.

MITSUBISHI/B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱55.75 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 28, 2004

¥109.06 = $1

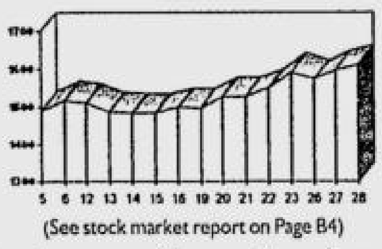
As of 5 p.m., April 28, 2004

GOLD: $ 397.20-397.70

per ounce Hong Kong, April 28, 2004

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks continue to rise

STOCKS, led by Ayala group firms, rose above the 1,600-level yesterday for the first time in 2004 on optimism President Macapagal-Arroyo will win a fresh mandate in May elections.

The main index ended 13.38 points, or 0.84 percent, higher at 1,610.31 points, its highest since March 6, 2001. The market has risen 11.64 percent so far this year.

Ayala Corp., the country's oldest and biggest conglomerate, gained 20 centavos, or 3.45 percent, to P6 ahead of its first-quarter results on May 6.

Its unit, Bank of the Philippine Islands, the country's second-largest lender, advanced P2, or 4.12 percent, to P50.50. Property unit Ayala Land Inc., the Philippines' largest real estate developer, jumped 20 centavos, or 3.51 percent, to P5.90.

Analysts said investors shrugged off the return of presidential candidate Raul Roco to the country following medical treatment in the United States, saying his abrupt departure had destroyed his campaign.

Ms Macapagal has expanded her lead in opinion polls over main rival, movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., ahead of the May elections, boosting investor sentiment. *Reuters*

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Napocor plans to float $1B in global bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

NATIONAL Power Corp. wants to take advantage of the favorable scenario in the global market by issuing $1 billion worth of global bonds to complete its borrowing requirement for the year.

According to a source, Napocor was encouraged to prepare for a global bond issue on its own after the national government sold last Tuesday $400 million worth of 7-year and 10-year global bonds. The proceeds of the latest bond issues were also intended to help meet Napocor's borrowing requirements.

The government intended to launch the bonds after the elections and issue only $300 million. Finance Secretary Eric Recto, however, said the cheap borrowing cost right now brought about by the high demand for Philippine debt papers encouraged officials to go for $400 million.

The $200 million worth of bonds that will mature in 2011 stood were sold at 375 basis points over US treasuries, while the remaining $200 million worth of bonds that will mature in 2014 had a spread of 405 basis points over US treasuries.

The market attributed the softening of rates on Philippine debt papers to recent surveys that showed President Macapagal-Arroyo, perceived to be the market's favorite candidate, gaining lead over her rivals.

The source said Napocor was hoping to launch the bond offering before the elections if the rates were still favorable.

The planned $1-billion will complete the $1.5-billion borrowing needs of Napocor for this year.

Napocor already has $500 million to partly cover its borrowing requirements after the national government raised on Napocor's behalf $100 million from a recent issuance of zero coupon bonds, and another $400 million from last Tuesday's bond sale.

Napocor's plan to issue bonds on its own, however, is seen to be a daring move for the debt-ridden power firm, which has been depending on the national government for its borrowing activities.

NTC seeks perks for cable TV firms

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission said it would endorse the restoration of the tax credits on the capital equipment importation of cable television firms. This incentive was suspended by the Bureau of Customs last year.

The commission said it had classified cable television as broadcast media, which were entitled to tax credits provided by Presidential Decree 1362. The Customs had questioned the application of the presidential decree on cable firms.

Philippine cable TV operators had asked the NTC to look into the issue and help restore the privilege as cable firms still hold outstanding tax credits.

Cable TV firms obtain tax credits every time the government uses cable air time. The tax credits serve as payment for government advertising. Cable TV firms were able to use the tax credits to offset their tax liabilities until the Customs refused to honor them last year.

The NTC said that the tax credit privilege "should also be applied to the cable TV industry inasmuch as cable TV facilities are similarly accessed by the government in its function of public information and education."

The commission also cited a 1999 opinion of the justice department that classified the cable television to be a form of mass media.

"The basis for the grant of tax credits is PD 1362 which recognizes the contribution of the broadcast media in national development effort and in the implementation of many government projects," the NTC noted.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said he was not aware that his agency had suspended honoring tax credits held by cable TV firms.

Cable operators had also asked the NTC to clarify whether they were covered by the Optical Media Board, the body created by law to stem the growing piracy of movies, music and software.

WAREHOUSE AUCTION

RESTAURANT AND KITCHEN EQUIPMENT
S/S Whipping Cream Machine, S/S Coffee Machine Refiller, S/S Commercial Microwave Oven, S/S Toastmaster, S/S Blender Station, S/S Refrigerator Counter, S/S Therma Gross Kitchen Oven, S/S Ice Bin Container, S/S Plate Warmer

ELECTRONIC ITEMS
Pioneer CD Player, Sony DVD & MP3 Aircons, Calculators, Telephones, Kenwood Oscilloscope

OFFICE EQUIPMENT
6 & 15 - D Steel Lockers, Visitors Chairs Fax Machines, Cabinets

COMPUTER PERIPHERALS
Monitors, Keyboards, Mouse, CD Rom Drives, FDD Drives, NEC Laptop Computers, HP DeskJet Printers

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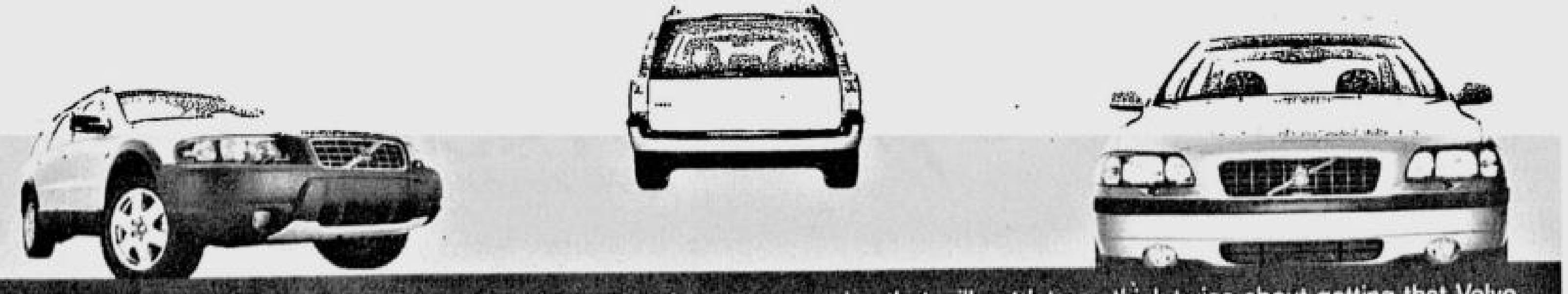

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1997 S40 SEDAN 1.8 L, 4 CYL, 16 VALVES 115 BHP, 5-speed M/T	P 600 T
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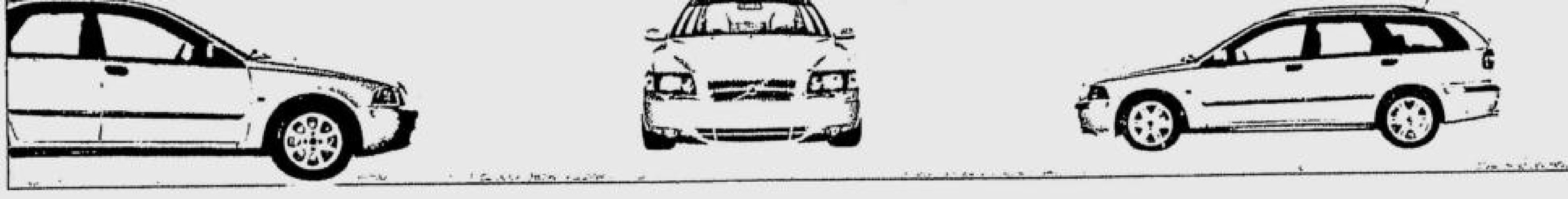
1997 960 ESTATE 3.0 L, 6 CYL, 24 VALVES 204 BHP, 4-speed A/T	P 800 T
2001 S70 LPT SEDAN 2.0 L, 5 CYL, 20 VALVES 161 BHP, 5-speed Adaptive A/T	P 950 T
2002 S60 SEDAN 2.0 L, 5 CYL, 20 VALVES 180 BHP, 5-speed Adaptive A/T Winner 2004 Transport Show: "BEST IN CAR PAINT"	P 2.2 M



WITHIN GOV'T TARGET

April inflation seen at 3.9%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said the country's annual inflation rate likely inched up in April alongside the increases in fuel and transport fare prices.

In an interview, BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco said the institution's estimate was that the year-on-year inflation rate for April would hit 3.9 percent or a bit higher than the 3.8 percent in March.

The estimate used the 1994-based consumer price index released by the National Statistics Office.

"In April we had increases in oil prices and there was also a transport fare hike so there will likely be some slight increase in inflation," Tetangco said.

But he said the April forecast was still within the government's target of a 4-5 percent average inflation for this year.

The BSP adopts an inflation-targeting approach to monetary management, which means that if the actual inflation figure exceeded its forecast, it would have to tighten its grip on money supply.

During its most recent policy rate-setting meeting earlier this month, the Monetary Board of the BSP kept its rates unchanged at 6.75 percent for overnight borrowing and 9 percent for overnight lending.

The BSP's policy rates were last adjusted in July last year when these were cut by 25 basis points or a quarter of a percentage point.

The country's inflation rate accelerated from 3.4 percent in February to 3.8 percent in March while the new 2000-based CPI series showed an inflation rate of 4.2 percent compared to 4 percent in February.

The BSP said it believed that cost-side factors continued to represent the biggest risk to the inflation outlook this year, given that demand-based pressures were being tempered by excess capacity.

But the institution is optimistic that such cost-side factors, such as increases in transport fares and oil prices, are likely to be short-lived and should not have a significant impact on the long-run path of inflation.

Insurance agency to oversee GSIS, SSS

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Social Security System (SSS) are set to be placed under the supervision of the Insurance Commission, a move aimed at instilling transparency in the operations of the two pension funds and therefore protect their members' interest.

The Department of Finance, the head agency of the pension funds, has already informed the two that Malacañang would soon issue an executive order placing them under the Insurance Commission.

Under the draft EO, the Insurance Commission will monitor the financial condition of the GSIS and the SSS and examine their business transactions at least once every two years. Copies of the evaluation results will be given to the DOF and the Office of the President.

The government's move to place the GSIS and the SSS under the supervision of the Insurance Commission followed proposals from various entities, including the DOF, of having the investment decisions of the GSIS monitored.

This was raised after the GSIS failed to service on time some of its members' claims, many of which were made by public schoolteachers.

While the GSIS explained the delays were caused by technical problems in its database, some members cast doubts on the pension funds' handling of its finances.

In response, GSIS President Winston Garcia said the pension fund supports the move to have an entity that will supervise operations and investment activities, as well as examine the financial condition of the GSIS.

He said the move would not only create transparency, but also assist the GSIS in crafting better investment strategies.

ADB sees . . .

From page B1

lost to other locations," the ADB stated.

"The budget deficit results, directly, in low levels of public investment," the bank stated. "The lack of public investment in infrastructure deters private investors. Then, the financing of the large deficit keeps interest rates relatively high for private investors and reduces funds available for private investment."

The report added that the country's large budget deficit was putting upward pressure on interest rates even when the central bank was trying to lower rates to stimulate investment. The authorities have little room to maneuver given that nearly a third of the budget is dedicated to debt servicing, so that other government spending has to be restricted to control the deficit, it explained.

Challenges likewise remained in dealing with interconnected issues of unemployment and population growth, the report said, noting that high unemployment was a major cause of poverty.

The report noted that the growth forecasts for this year were based on the assumption of a smooth transition to a new government after the May election and that there would be no external shocks.

In other areas of the economy, the bank noted promising signs of growth. Agriculture was forecast to pick up by 3.7-4.7 percent in 2004 and 2005; and, industry, by 3.6-4.8 percent led by stronger manufacturing and a rise in public construction from election-related spending.

The services sector was expected to grow by 5.5-6.3 percent as brisk growth in the rest of Asia, and improved global demand for electronics products was seen to boost the economy.

Expected to spur the private consumption growth was the continued rapid expansion in remittances from the country's seven million overseas workers.

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500,000 - 999,999	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	8.00
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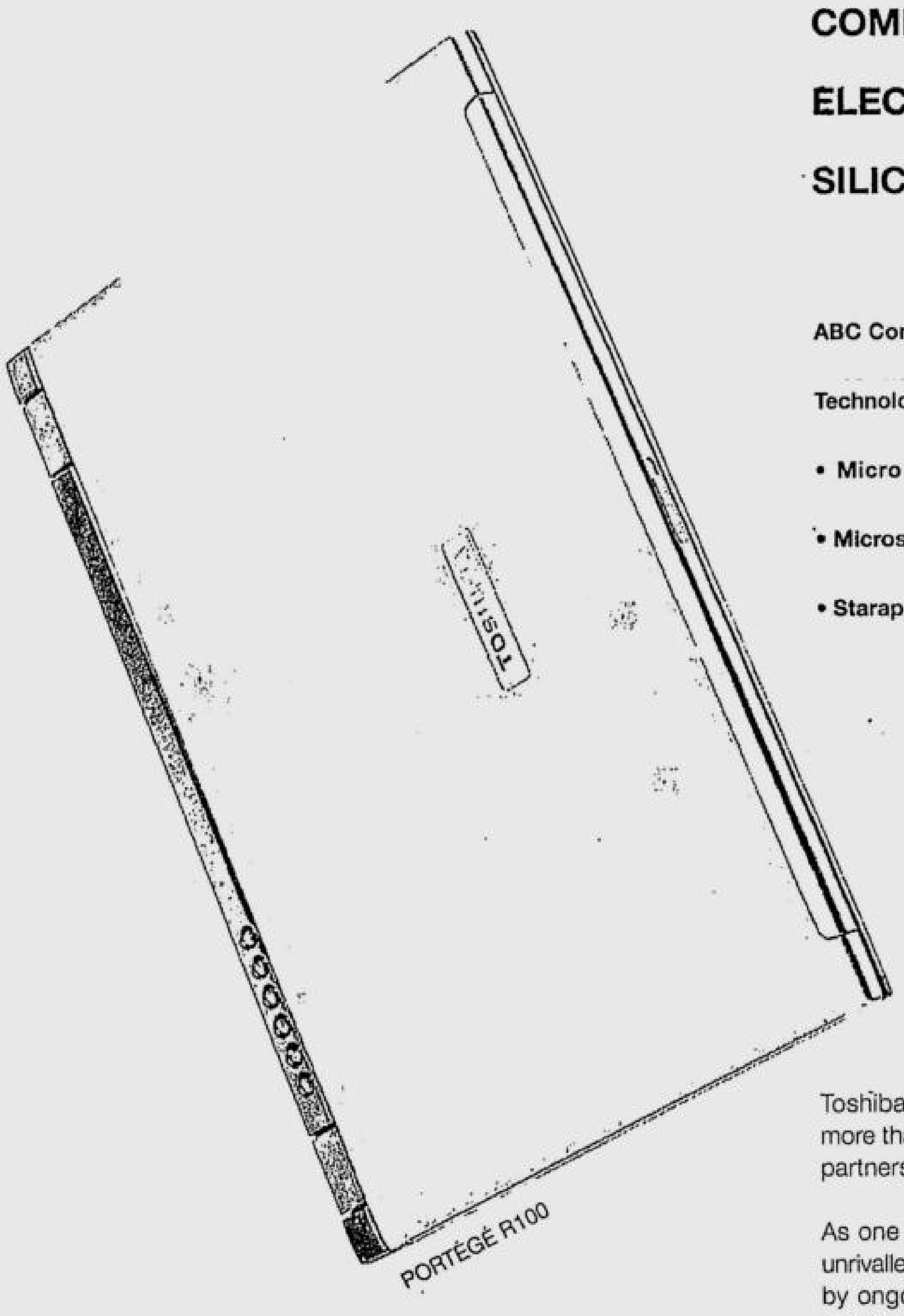

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The empire writes back

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IT'S now time for us to know what is going on in the third biggest revenue outfit of the government known as Pagcor, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Last week, I wrote a column on issues which I picked up from some talks among insiders of the casino empire.

For instance, they talked about the fat bonuses and perks which the Pagcor board enjoyed, things which were decided by—well, who else—also the Pagcor board.

Pagcor's PR and advertising director, Edward King, immediately wrote me a letter the following day.

The immediate response probably had something to do with the headline of this newspaper on that same day when my column came out.

* * *

THE REPORT said that Archbishop Oscar Cruz held a press conference to denounce the alleged "mismanagement" of Pagcor. He even had some documents.

Here's a little secret: A board member of Pagcor actually called me up. He inquired whether it was all a concerted effort, possibly connected with politics.

Down here in our *barangay*, we know it simply as "paranoia." In public service, it is known as SYA—you know, as in, "save your ass."

For on the same day, Malacañang issued a statement, saying that Gloriaetta said that Pagcor officials should explain the issues themselves.

In other words, Gloriaetta was distancing herself from Pagcor. It's as if this cute administration of Gloriaetta had nothing to do with the state gaming monopoly.

Well, it's election time, and Malacañang should only shield Gloriaetta from explosive issues like what happened to all that gambling money.

* * *

ANYWAY, the Pagcor letter goes:

"We write in response to issues raised against Pagcor in your column entitled "Once Fun Time" in (the April 22, 2004) issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

"First of all, there is no 'cash flow problem' in Pagcor. In fact, in the first quarter of this year, Pagcor has reported a record-breaking income of P5.41 billion, which is 7.13 percent higher than the recorded income during the same period last year.

"The Pagcor loan you mentioned is an old issue which we have already answered several times before.

"Unlike ordinary businesses or corporations, Pagcor's income is subject to several mandated remittances to different government agencies before it can be used for operating expenses.

"No cash is left with Pagcor and it starts each month with a clean slate, no cash on hand.

"The loans that were drawn by Pagcor from Philippine National Bank and Land Bank of the Philippines were utilized for casino leasehold improvements such as the construction of the new Casino Filipino Tagaytay and Casino Filipino Angeles, as well as the replacement of obsolete gaming equipment.

"Second, there is no proof of any syndicate cheating Pagcor of, as you said, 'something like P50 million.' In the casino gaming business, there are instances when the house loses and Pagcor is no exception.

"However, rest assured that Pagcor is far from losing business and is, in fact, currently enjoying a robust growth in income.

"Third, the provision of truncheons to *barangay* leaders and about 100 motorcycles to various barangays in Metro Manila is part of an ongoing Pagcor project called Sulong Barangay.

"The project has been in implementation since Pagcor chair Efraim C. Genuino took his post in 2001 and is not part of the elections whatsoever.

"We would also like to clarify that Pagcor only purchased five pickup trucks and not 50, as published. These pickups are used by Pagcor for its relief and rescue operations as well as medical and dental missions.

"Pagcor's income is distributed monthly to various legally mandated beneficiaries.

"Five percent of its gross income goes to the Bureau of Internal Revenue as franchise tax. Fifty percent of the balance then goes to the coffers of the national government.

"Other beneficiaries are the Philippine Sports Commission (5 percent), the Board of Claims, casino host cities, etc. After its income has been distributed to its beneficiaries, the balance is then remitted to the Presidential Social Fund.

"Lastly, Pagcor's car plan is an old benefit availed of by Pagcor officers. It has been in place ever since the previous administration.

"Its price cap is competitive to those offered by other corporations and has only been increased last June 2001 to keep up with the current market prices.

"The fact that it is a car plan means that the officers who avail themselves of this benefit still pay for their vehicles, however, in installment."

The letter ends with reference to the issues of mismanagement of Pagcor which were raised by Archbishop Cruz. Of course it denied everything.

And that's all, folks, and the issues will likely be forgotten soon, and the Pagcor board may sleep tight now, until of course the next issue explodes. But that is life in the thankless job in public service, right?

Central body to regulate banks, insurance companies planned

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) said it was studying with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Insurance Commission the possibility of forming a central body that would supervise the activities of banks, insurance firms and other financial entities.

In a speech, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista told members of the Philippine Constitution Association last week that one alternative was to separate the regulatory functions of these agencies from their policy-making functions, which could only be done by amending the Constitution. Such an amendment would involve changing the Central Bank Act, the Securities Regulation Code and the Insurance Act to come up with a single regulator.

Under the present system, she said the regulation of banks fell under the jurisdiction of the BSP.

"The international trend is to carve out the regulation of banks and set up an institution that will regulate the lending institutions with or without all or any of the following: insurance, securities and pension," Bautista said.

She said that another option was that, instead of removing the BSP's regulatory function, the securities and insurance sectors would be placed under the central bank's jurisdiction similar to what was done in Singapore.

"This will make the central bank a very powerful body, but there will be economies of scale and there will be no regulatory arbitrage," she said.

The SEC chair said the government could also explore the possibility of insulating the Monetary Board from the "day to day (regulatory) problems" by designating BSP deputy governors to handle specific areas, banking, insurance or securities. The deputy governors' decision will be final and can only be appealed in courts.

"This will enable the Monetary Board to concentrate on monetary policies and on setting direction for the regulatory policies. It need not be bothered by the tasks of auditing of banks, brokers, listed companies and insurance companies. The three regulators must be part of the Monetary Board so that they can be guided in their roles," Bautista said.

A single body for the financial system was adopted in 22 countries, including Singapore, Japan and the United Kingdom. A unified regulatory agency is expected to address the problems arising from poor communication and lack of cooperation among agencies supervising these sectors, and to minimize the gaps in the regulation and supervision of financial intermediaries.

Philex lost ₱8M from mine leak

BAGUIO CITY—Philex Mining Co. was estimated to have lost P8 million due to the four-day shutdown of its Padcal copper and gold operations.

Padcal's operations resumed on April 6 after sealing a rotting shard of wood in one of its three waste impounding dams.

The dams are designed to seal up to 142.6 million tons of mine effluents in Tuba, Benguet.

Philex, whose Padcal project is winding down in 2011 after 45 years of operation, shut down its operations on April 2 at 5 p.m. after sanitation inspectors detected leaks that were traced to its Tailings Pond No. 3 on March 31, said Redempta Baluda, the firm's environment manager.

Baluda said Philex was determining how much mine waste had eroded from its Tailings Pond No. 3 toward the Agno River.

"The effluent had discolored the river, and we asked engineers and miners to check," she said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ROBINSONS Land Corp. executive vice president Frederick D. Go and president and chief operating officer Lance Y. Gokongwei answer questions from stockholders during the company's annual stockholders' meeting held at the Holiday Inn Galleria Manila last April 22.

ALI plans to raise ₱2B to pay maturing debts

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY giant Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) is looking at raising up to P2 billion through short-term debt in the second quarter, after getting regulatory approval for a commercial debt float.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) approved the issuance by the company of one-year commercial papers. Proceeds of which will be used to repay maturing debts, fund operating expenses and beef up inventory.

ALI has tapped Standard Chartered Bank to manage the proposed debt offer.

The proposed issue will consist of fixed-rate or floating rate tranches with interest rates based on prevailing market rates.

Of the P2 billion to be raised, P1.5 billion will be used to repay a portion of the P2.05 billion in debts falling due this year.

Debts that will mature this year consist of P1 billion in STCPs and P1.05 billion in long-term loan.

The rest of the amount will be used to cover P300 million in operating expenses and the planned purchase of inventories worth P180 million.

Sources said the company might issue the debt paper after the May presidential elections. The size of the debt float has yet to be finalized.

Credit rating firm Philratings Inc. assigned a PRS1 to ALI's proposed P2-billion debt given the company's "strong cash generation and moderate debt use."

CURRENCIES

April 28, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.838293	1.000000	55.5770
Japan	Yen	0.007658	0.009135	0.5077
United Kingdom	Pound	1.502724	1.792600	99.6273
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107488	0.128222	7.1262
Switzerland	Franc	0.646083	0.770713	42.8339
Canada	Dollar	0.620590	0.740302	41.1438
Singapore	Dollar	0.494335	0.589692	32.7733
Australia	Dollar	0.614720	0.733299	40.7546
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.223648	2.652590	147.4230
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223545	0.266667	14.8206
Brunei	Dollar	0.492882	0.587959	32.6770
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0064
Thailand	Baht	0.021143	0.025221	1.4017
UAE	Dirham	0.228237	0.272264	15.1316
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.192900	66.2978
Argentina	Peso	0.296478	0.353669	19.6559
Brazil	Real	0.288074	0.343643	19.0986
Denmark	Kroner	0.134435	0.160367	8.9127
India	Rupee	0.018992	0.022655	1.2591
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220633	0.263193	14.6275
Mexico	New Peso	0.074363	0.088708	4.9301
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527295	0.629010	34.9585
Norway	Kroner	0.121515	0.144955	8.0562
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014615	0.017434	0.9689
South Africa	Rand	0.126167	0.150505	8.3646
Korea	Won	0.000728	0.000868	0.0482
Sweden	Kroner	0.109742	0.130911	7.2756
Syria	Pound	0.016214	0.019342	1.0750
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025456	0.030367	1.6877
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000438	0.000522	0.0290

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 28, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.15	37,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	17	195,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	48.5	50.5	48.5	50.5	2,750,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	40.5	40.5	40	40	76,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	380,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	24.75	25	148,100
Philippine National Bank	23	23.5	23	23.5	25,000
Phil. Savings Bank	26	26	26	26	1,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	45,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	215	216	215	215	440
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1495	1495	1495	1495	990
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	26	25	25.5	126,400
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.66	320,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	910	915	890	900	63,910
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	3,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	2,800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	5,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.74	1.76	15,695,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	15,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1160	1160	1155	1155	126,650
Ivantage Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	270,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	83,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	20.25	20.5	20	20	475,900
Manila Electric Co. B	32.5	32.5	31.5	31.5	1,583,500
Petron Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.35	3.4	4,489,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	3,000,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	2.95	3	426,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	150,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28	28	28	28	41,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.25	261,900
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	60	59	59.5	159,200
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74.5	74.5	119,100
Universal Robina Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	1,900,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.9	6.1	5.9	6	8,356,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3	3.05	3	3.05	1,029,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	460,000
Atn Holdings, Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.61	0.58	0.59	19,260,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	20,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	2,310,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.024	0.027	0.024	0.025	71,500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	90,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	28	29	28	28.5	3,591,000
Ionics Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	90,000
J.G Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.78	1,330,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.2	1.22	1.18	1.2	4,124,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	9,410,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	150,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.84	280,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.0875	0.09	0.0825	0.085	2,000,000
Wellex Industries, Inc.	0.28	0.32	0.2	0.23	26,040,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	130,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	250,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	25.5	26.5	25.5	26	1,122,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6	6	6	6	3,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.9	15,502,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	3,300,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	4,450,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.1	23,954,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.17	1,480,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	2,480,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	24,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.4	9,510,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	1,650,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	110,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	80,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	8,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	2,000,000

DISCLOSURES

SOUTHEAST Asia Cement Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 5, 9 a.m. at the Balagtas Room of Manila Peninsula Hotel. Stockholders of record as of June 15 are entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

* * *

EURO-MED Laboratories Phil. Inc. appointed Tomas P. Maramba Jr. as independent director, Teodora D. Tan as director, and William G. Padolina, Enrique C. Yap and Evangeline V. Baviera as incumbent members of its audit committee.

* * *

CROWN Equities Inc. disclosed the resignation of Danilo S. Venida as president and CEO of the company.

* * *

PCI Leasing & Finance Inc. purchased 721,000 of its own shares at P1.32 per share on April 27 pursuant to its shares buy-back program.

* * *

MANILA Jockey Club Inc. corrected that Alfonso G. Reyno III was elected as executive vice president and COO, and not as deputy chief operating officer as indicated in a previous disclosure.

* * *

DIVERSIFIED Financial Network Inc. deferred its stockholders' meeting to Aug. 12, 10:30 a.m. at the 3/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. corner 2nd Ave. eSquare IT Park SEZ, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig Metro Manila.

* * *

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. disclosed that Arnaldo L. Africa would become managing director for the regional expansion of the company, and Danilo C. Navarro would replace him as director and president effective May 15.

* * *

ABACUS Consolidated Resources & Holdings Inc.'s board approved the following: the company's audited consolidated financial report '03; the rescheduling of its annual stockholders' meeting to June 14, and the adoption of a resolution on the revised disclosure rules.

* * *

TRANSPACIFIC Broadband Group International Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 12:30 p.m. at Level 5, Yuchengco Institute of Advanced Studies, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

* * *

CASHROUNDS Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting to June 10.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **San Miguel Properties Inc.** were Ramon S. Ang, Jeronimo U. Kilayko, Ferdinand K. Constantino, Hector L. Hoflena, Elmer B. Santos, Chonabeth I. Nazario and Carmelo L. Santiago.

* * *

KEPPEL Philippines Properties Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 10, 2 p.m. at Mactan Room, Edsa Shangri-la, 1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. Record date is May 14.

* * *

STENIEL Manufacturing Corp. postponed its annual stockholders' meeting to June 14.

Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research

Mitsubishi makes . . .

From page B1

Hideyasu Tagaya, executive officer and corporate general manager of Mitsubishi's international operations headquarters, said in a statement yesterday that the investment decision was based on the country's potentials of becoming a globally competitive automotive manufacturing center.

He added that the government's active support for automobile exports was another factor that led the Japanese firm to jack up its investments here.

"We reiterate our sincere appreciation of the proactive way the government extended assistance on Mitsubishi's project," Mitsubishi Philippines president and chief executive Kengo Takase said in a letter to Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima.

ADB says developing Asia to grow by 6.8% in 2004

SEOUL, South Korea—Economic growth in developing Asia is expected to hit 6.8 percent this year.

This is due to brisk inter-regional trade and consumer spending, the Asian Development Bank said Wednesday.

The forecast, released in the ADB's first ever Asian Development Outlook, painted a rosy picture.

The ADB, however, warned that terrorism, a possible slowdown in China and epidemics such as SARS and bird flu still pose risks.

Still, regional economic growth reached a better than expected 6.3 percent in 2003, despite uncertainties about the Iraq war, high oil prices, the outbreak of the respiratory illness SARS and a slow global recovery, the ADB said.

For 2005, the ADB predicts the region's developing economies on the whole will grow at 6.7 percent.

China, India, Thailand and Vietnam will lead the surge.

The regional economy was also buoyed by an increase in consumer demand, especially in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

"An expanding urban middle class and the relatively young age structure of populations are fundamentally changing consumption behavior throughout developing Asia," ADB chief economist Ifzal Ali said.

"Confidence is high in the economic outlook of the region," he said.

But the ADB warned, however, that an "abrupt slowdown" in China's ability to contain the overheating of investment in the country could slow intra-regional trade and undercut growth.

The 63-member Asian Development Bank is a Manila-based financial institution that provides loans and technical economic assistance to the region.

Wednesday's forecast did not include Japan, the world's No. 2 economy.

The ADB holds its annual meeting in mid-May on the South Korean resort island of Jeju. *AP*

IMF says Rato faces one rival for top post

WASHINGTON—Former Spanish Finance and Economy Minister Rodrigo Rato faces a single rival in a contest to lead the International Monetary Fund, the IMF said Tuesday.

Rato appears virtually guaranteed to win the leadership of the IMF after securing the backing of Europeans, the United States and developing countries.

Out of five original nominations, three withdrew, leaving just Rato and New York-born Mohamed el-Erian, an emerging-market bond fund manager, the fund's executive board said in a statement.

"The board has invited the candidates to meet with directors this week," the IMF board said after an informal meeting.

El-Erian was among three names put forward March 31 by Egyptian IMF executive director Shakour Shaalan, representative of the Arab group in the fund.

He is emerging-market debt chief at Pacific Investment Management Co., which he joined in 1999 after 15 years with the IMF, leading policy work on debt and country issues.

El-Erian was nominated after a protest by the so-called G11, an informal group of IMF executive directors claiming to represent more than 100 countries, against the way the IMF chief's job is reserved for Europeans.

By unwritten rule, the managing director of the fund is a European while the president of the sister institution, the World Bank, is reserved for an American.

Rato arrived here Sunday and immediately began wooing members in a meeting with the African countries.

On Friday, policymakers from developing countries gathered for meetings of the IMF and World Bank here, threw their weight behind Rato even as they attacked the way he was chosen. *AFP*

Asia faces forex crisis, ADB says

SEOUL—The massive accumulation of foreign exchange reserves in Asia over the past two years could trigger another financial crisis, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) warned Wednesday.

Reserves held by developing economies in Asia increased from $497 billion at the end of 1997, the year of the Asian financial crisis, to $1.3 trillion at the end of 2003, according to the regional bank.

Ifzal Ali, ADB chief economist, said most Asian countries which have recovered quickly from the 1997 crisis have stocked up on trade and current account surpluses to build up huge reserves as a "fire wall" against financial contagion.

The accumulation of reserves that at first reflected the prudent behavior of policy makers, now appears to be fueled by speculative market behavior stemming from rigidities in many of the region's exchange rates, he said.

Such a development carries significant risks for the region.

First, capital flows could reverse briskly, sending negative signals about the economies affected, even though the economic fundamentals remained unchanged, the ADB said in its 2004 economic outlook for the region.

Interventions to maintain stable exchange rates could result in a significant further increase in domestic liquidity, which might lead to "unbridled domestic credit expansion and create conditions for a new Asian financial crisis," it said.

Ali said increasing confidence and higher interest rates in the region have attracted flows of portfolio investment and other foreign funds. *AFP*

Japan output flat in March

TOKYO—Japanese industrial output was flat in March but manufacturers expect a rebound in coming months on demand for digital gadgets, machinery and steel, keeping up the momentum of the country's export-driven economic recovery.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said on Wednesday that output rose 0.1 percent in March from February, seasonally adjusted, well below the 0.7 percent expected by economists.

But production remained strong for electronics and other high-tech goods that are in demand in major markets such as China, and the ministry said manufacturers expected output to rise 5.6 percent in April and 2.2 percent in May.

"I think the main news here is the forecast, which is particularly strong," said HSBC Securities economist Peter Morgan.

With Japan's economic recovery gaining a firmer footing, the Bank of Japan kept its super-easy monetary policy unchanged at a one-day Policy Board meeting.

BOJ board members also released a semiannual outlook on growth and prices, in which they forecast deflation in consumer prices to persist during the fiscal year that began this month.

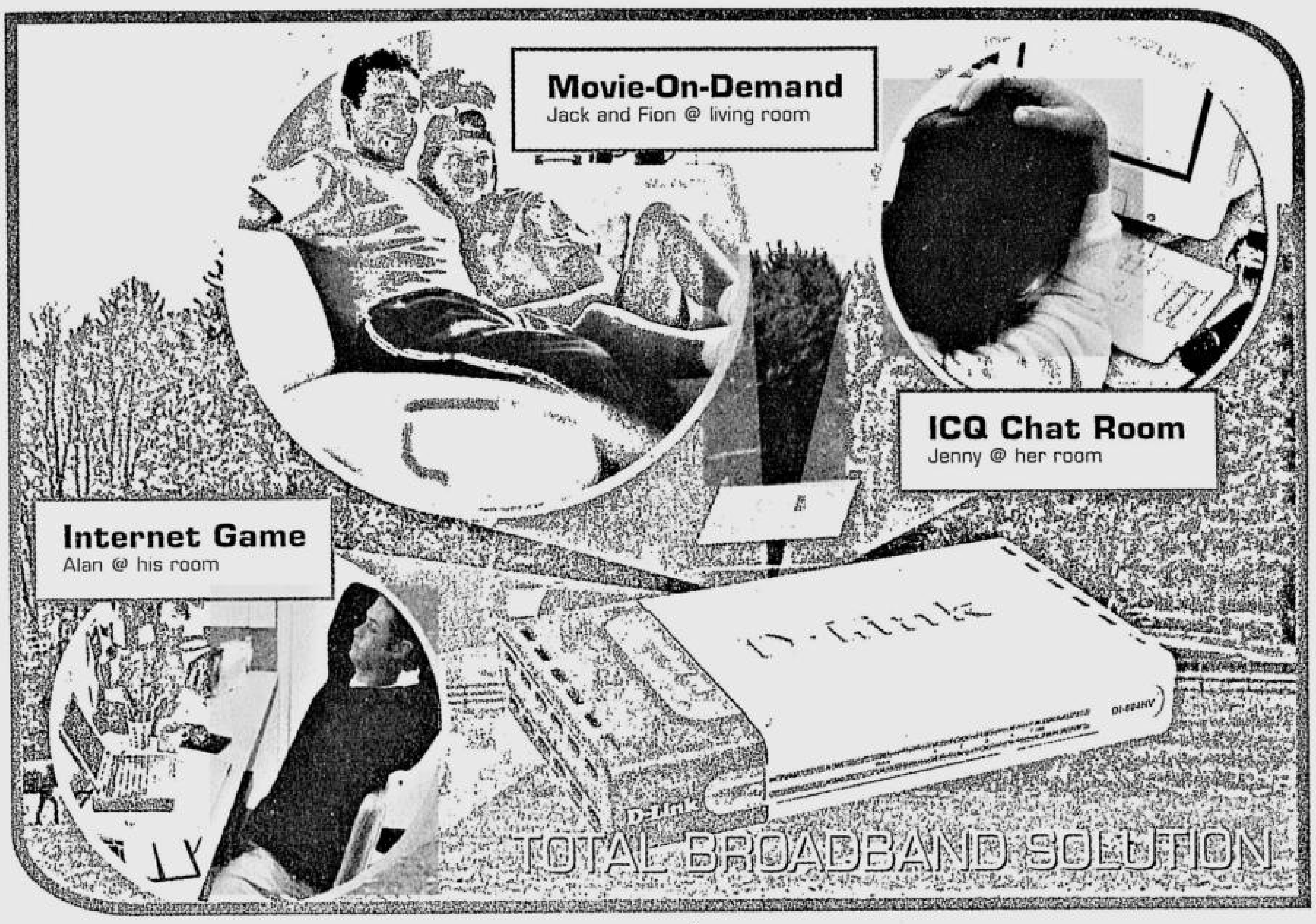
The median forecast by the nine-member board was for a 0.2-percent fall in the core consumer price index (CPI), excluding volatile fresh food prices.

The core forecasts, excluding the highest and lowest estimates, were for a fall of between 0.1 and 0.2 percent.

"The fact that they kept their forecast for CPI in the negative territory seems to suggest they are not going to reverse their easy monetary policy," said Seiji Adachi, Credit Suisse First Boston Securities (Japan).

The central bank has said it won't end its "quantitative easing" policy, under which it floods the money market with far more funds than it needs to keep interest rates near zero, until the CPI shows a sustained rise.

The board members also projected a real GDP growth of 3.0-3.2 percent, roughly in line with private sector forecasts. *Reuters*



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Editor Aries Espinosa

Globe AutoloadMax credits down to the last peso now available in Jollibee

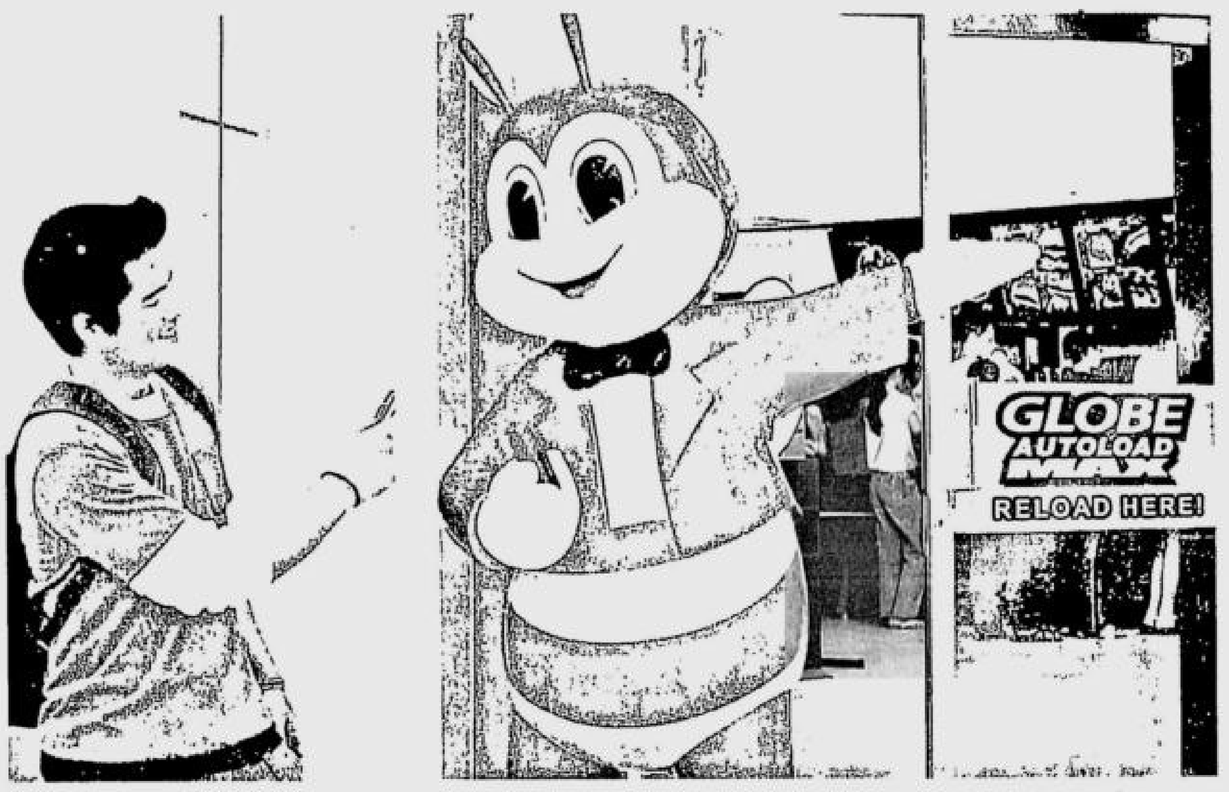
SUMMERTIME is when your Globe Handyphone gets an ultimate workout. Constantly calling and texting your friends and loved ones about the many exciting and colorful places that you visit will naturally take its toll on your prepaid phone credits. Luckily, Globe has AutoloadMAX, an innovative and valuable service that makes it possible for you to reload credits from hundreds and thousands of authorized dealers, sari-sari stores and now, in Joliibee outlets nation-. wide!

This summer, Globe has made it even more convenient to zap your Globe Prepaid with AutoloadMAX even while you are taking a break and grabbing a bite at Jollibee. With over 350 participating outlets nationwide, you -- and your Globe Prepaid -- will never go hungry.

For as low as P25 for Globe and P1 increments, you're sure to stay connected all the time. Much more, sa papiso-pisong dagdag, (i.e. load P26, P27, P28), you can even use your lose change to purchase your favorite Jollibee meal! Sulit bawat piso and sakto sa bulsa mo!

As an added bonus, you can get Jollibee freebies with EVERY AutoloadMAX load purchased from April 17 to May 31, 2004 in over 350 participating Jollibee branches nationwide. For every P50-P99 load purchased, a Globe Prepaid subscriber can choose from either a Jolly Krunchy Twirl or a dessert pie. For every P100 to P150 prepaid credits purchased, subscribers get to take home eithera Tuna Pie, a Regular YumBurger or Regular Fries. The HIGHER the reload, the BIGGER the price!

So, next time your Globe Handyphone gets hungry for prepaid credits, visit your favorite Jollibee outlet and get a Globe AutoloadMAX reload. Staying connected has never been this delicious!



ENJOY constant connectivity with Globe AutoloadMAX now available in over 350 Jollibee participating outlets nationwide.

Manansala Residential Tower almost completely sold

ROCKWELL Land Corp has announced that the Manansala Residential Towers in Rockwell Center, Makati is now 98 percent sold.

An integral part of the Rockwell Center's master plan, The Manansala offers studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units perfect for couples and growing families. It is also a very private retreat with thick and sturdy walls that make perfect neighbors.

Residents can avail themselves of a gym and fitness center, swimming and wading pool, badminton courts, retail outlets, a multi-purpose function room, children's playground, and a roof deck patio for parties and functions.

The roster of Manansala buyers range from businessmen, physicians, pilots, bankers, lawyers and expatriates. People from all walks of life have chosen The Manansala as their future residence-from young, single professionals and couples with growing families to elderly citizens.

It is also quite surprising to note that a number of repatriates prefer a slice of the urban life at the heart of Rockwell Center.

The posh Manansala boasts of two towers and goes all the way by using only the highest quality materials. Imported granite and marble, high-grade faucets and taps, provisions for cable TV and telephone lines, split-type air conditioners and neutrally painted walls to serve as your own canvas. An Asian-themed lobby anchors the towers with foyers that are surrounded by pocket parks and greenery. Parking is provided for each unit with ample space for guests.

The comforts of home, plus the convenience of having a world-class shopping center, and an exclusive city club are all at stone's throw away. Rockwell Center contains all the elements of daily living, from residential, educational, office, commercial, and entertainment in one contained community.

Part of the construction plan for the two towers of The Manansala are 38 and 41 stories. Now on the 21st level of construction, the target completion date is in December 2005.

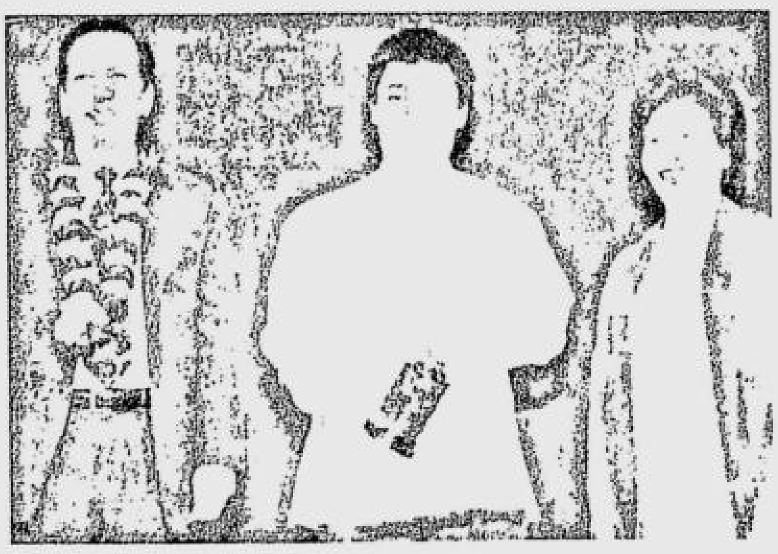
Rockwell Land executives expect Manansala to be completely sold out by June 2004.

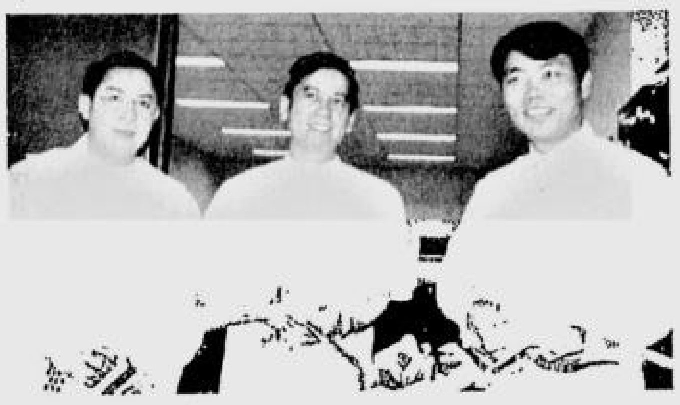
For more information about The Manansala, visit www.e-rockwell.com, or call 890-6888.

HABITAT FOUNDER TIES UP WITH AYALA
Millard Fuller, founder and president of Habitat for Humanity International is joined by his wife and co-founder Linda during the launch of Integrated Kalahi (Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan) ng Ayala. Ayala executive managing director Fernando Zobel de Ayala joined the Fullers together with Mayor Ben-Hur Abalos during the launch of the partnership at Makaturing Street in Mandaluyong. Looking on are Ayala and community representatives.

AVON WINS ANVIL AWARDS
Four corporate programs of Avon Philippines grabbed four awards in the prestigious Anvil Awards held recently. Receiving the awards are the proud Avon team: (from left) PR supervisor Olen Jalandoni, assistant PR manager Faith Fernandez Aranton, vice president for marketing Paul Lancos, senior manager for PR Louie Migne, PR consultant Joy Buensalido, and marketing communications groups manager Alice Orleans.

SIA RECOGNIZED BY PARANGAL NG BAYAN
The Parangal ng Bayan Foundation Inc has recognized and awarded Singapore Airlines as Most Outstanding International Airline 2004 in the Annual National Consumers Excellence Awards. SIA is cited for its exemplary contributions to the community, quality in operations, staff professionalism, customer satisfaction and affordability. Photo shows (from left) Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, SIA general manager Philippines David Lau, Parangal ng Bayan chair Sister Vickie Dizon.





SAMSUNG OPENS DON BOSCO TECH E-LAB
Sang Youl Eom (right), president and CEO of Samsung Philippines Electronics Corp. leads the inauguration of the Samsung e-Laboratory at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Makati City. With him are Fr. Exequiel Veloso (left) MSTC spiritual moderator, and Fr. Gregorio Bicomong Jr., Don Bosco provincial economer.

Grocery shopping- the healthy way

YOU go in to a grocery store, your shopping list in hand. But as your push cart around the aisles between what seems like miles of shelves piled high with products, you find yourself grabbing a little of this and a little of that. By the time you're lined up at the checkout counter your cart is filled with much more than you planned on buying-and odds are a lot of its snack food.

Start eating healthier-a lot of grocers now provide low-fat, healthy alternatives to all the over-processed food. The trick here is planning and reacquainting yourself with all the healthy food choices your grocery store offers

You have to have a battle plan when you step into a grocery store.

Plan a health menu

Plan your family's meals at least two weeks in advance. Make the meals balanced and nutritious which means meals complete with micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and fats - for example, instant noodles during breakfast or as snacks is a good way to stock up on carbohydrates, the most important macronutrient.

Make a grocery list

Based on your menu, make a list of what you need to buy. Always remember - stick to your grocery list. While its okay to indulge in a few items, that are not on the list, try to make it a point to buy only what you need.

Eat before you shop

Going to the grocery hungry will make you more inclined to grab more food off the shelves than you normally would - like snacks and sweets, which put on the pounds and aren't really that healthy.

Read the labels

Take note of the ingredients of the product you are getting. Also, remember that ingredients are listed in order of concentration, from most to least. Some products, such as mayonnaise and catsup, are made according to set "standards of identity" so the ingredients don't have to be listed. Compare different nutritional values of similar products and be conscious of expiration dates.

Bits Clips

P250 buffet dinner at Robbinsdale Hotel

TUCKED on the corner of bustling Aranet Center and Palanza Street in Quezon City is a charming hotel that is gaining the respect of veteran hoteliers for the good food prepared by its executive chef. Robbinsdale Hotel offers a sumptuous buffet dinner from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. every Friday for only P250 net at the Robbinsdale Coffee Shop that exudes an ambiance that is both romantic and cozy at the same time. Robbinsdale is a marketing affiliate of Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corporation. For reservations and inquiries, call 716-1262, 7162581 or email at robhotel@pacific.net.ph or visit its website at www.genesishotels.com.

Save lives, win masterpieces

OPERATION Blessing Foundation, the humanitarian arm of the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) Asia and The 700 Club - is holding its 4th art raffle dubbed "Heart for Life" today at the Mondragod Ballroom, Mondragon House in Makati City. Participants in art raffle will win masterpieces by renowned artists such as Napoleon Abueva and the late Jerry Elizalde Navarro, Malang, Ramon Orlina, Lino Severino, Fred Lingoren, Cid Reyes, Cris Cruz, Magoo Valencia, Rafael Pacheco, Raul Piedra, Nemi Miranda, and a host of the others. Tickets are at P5,000 each to art collectors, individuals and corporate donors. Every ticket buyer has a chance to win artworks worth at least the value of the ticket, but could win a masterpiece worth double, triple or even ten times the ticket price. Proceeds will benefit Operation Blessing's Community Transformation Programs in Payatas and Montalban, where qualified children receive health and education assistance and their parents are provided with livelihood opportunities. For more information and other inquiries, call Grace Lara at 840-4174, 812-4747 or 0918-9187658. or vist CBN Asia office at the Fourth Floor Sagittarius Building, H.V. dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City. You can also access the CBN Asia website at www.cbnasia.org.

MHPHS alumni homecoming

Batch 1957 of the Marcelo H. del Pilar High School (MHPHS) in Malolos, Bulacan, will hold its annual grand reunion on Saturday, May 1. The affair will mark the class' 47th graduation anniversary. Venue for this year's homecoming will be the residence of Amanda Capulong, a member of the class, at Barangay Cruz, Guiguinto Bulacan. Contact persons in Metro Manila are Rodolfo Barredo, tel. no. 869-6768, and Rodolfo Tayao, tel. no. 813-5441. In Malolos, Bulacan, please contact Corazon Sebastian, tel. no. (044) 791-4111, and Atty. Cris Santiago, tel. no. (044) 791-0703.

'3 for the Road' at Merks

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

ARNOLD R. CRUZ, whose last known address is Bustos, Bulacan is advised to coordinate with the DSWD Field Office 3, Tarlac City, Tel. No. (045)982-3195 regarding the adoption of a child he abandoned on July 20, 1992 Mr. & Mrs. Antonio C. Bañaga are interested to adopt said child
(PDI-April 29, May 6 & 13, 2004)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ODILIA C SONGCO was extrajudicially settled with waiver of share among his heirs as per Doc No 56, Page 13, Book No. 10, Series of 2004 under Notary Public Atty Jimmy D Lacaral of Mandaluyong City (PDI-April 29, May 6 and 13, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE PRISCILLA T. ARROYO WAS EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED AMONG HER HEIRS AS PER DOC. 312, PAGE 68, BOOK NO. 211, SERIES OF 2004 BY NOTARY PUBLIC ATTY. SILVERIO I IBAY, SR. OF QUEZON CITY. (PDI-April, 22, 29 and May 6 2004)

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INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION TO BID FOR PROVISION OF OFFICE SUPPLIES/EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY SERVICES (ADB/OAS-2004/004)

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, invites interested companies to apply for prequalification to bid for the provision of office supplies/equipment procurement and delivery services.
2. The Contractor shall maintain an inventory of ADB's standard office supply items including forms, envelopes, stationery and a wide range of non-standard office supply items and office equipment (excluding furniture),and to make them available to authorized ADB staff located at the ADB Building, No. 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City within 36 hours from receipt of their requests and to pack orders from Resident Missions/ Offices (RM/RO) for shipping and delivery to ADB's Receiving Unit within 36 hours from receipt of their request.
3. Prequalification documents may be obtained from the Head, Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services, Room 4223W, at the above address from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on any working day starting from **29 April to 10 May 2004**, upon presentation of the receipt of payment in cash or manager's check of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Three Hundred (P300.00) at ADB Cash Room, Room G239W.
4. Last day for submission of application for prequalification is **11 May 2004.**
5. Only prequalified bidders shall be invited to participate in the bidding exercise to be conducted by ADB. Bid documents will be issued to prequalified bidders from **24 to 25 May 2004.**
6. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of prequalification documents shall be borne solely by the applicant. ADB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications for prequalification.

Chairman
Procurement Committee for Services
Office of Administrative Services

(PDI - April 29 & 30, 2004)

INVITATION FOR RE-BID

ARMM SOCIAL FUND PROJECT
Loan No. 7153 PH
IFRB–ASF–01-2004

April 29, 2004

1. The Government of the Philippines through the ARMM Social Fund (ASF) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) towards the cost of strategic infrastructure component of the ARMM Social Fund (ASF) Project and it intends to apply a portion of this proceeds to cover eligible payments under the contract for the construction of various infrastructure sub-projects. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.
2. The ARMM Social Fund (ASF) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction and / or rehabilitation of the hereunder subproject:
   - Sub-Project Code : SRI-SUL-RHF-001
     Title : Rehabilitation and Improvement of Sulu Provincial Hospital
     Project Location : Poblacion, Jolo, Sulu
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at ARMM Social Fund, 3rd Floor VHW (Land Bank) Building, Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City. Telephone Numbers (062) 992-2684-86 & 992-2706, Fax No. 991-9410, E-Mail: ASF @ mozcom.com
4. A complete set of bidding document in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of non-refundable fee of ***Php3,500.00*** or its equivalent in a fully convertible currency, for each set starting **May 3, 2004.** The method of payment will be on cash basis only.
5. Bids shall be valid for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days after bid opening and must be delivered and will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representative who choose to attend at **10:00 A.M. on June 1, 2004** at the ASF Conference Room, 3rd Floor, VHW (Land Bank) Bldg., Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City and must be accompanied by a minimum bid security of at least 2.5% of the total bid amount in the form of cash, certified check, or bank guarantee drawn against a Bank acceptable to the ASF to expire thirty (30) calendar days beyond bid validity.
6. Interested bidders are invited to attend a Pre-Bid Conference to be held at ASF Office on **May 11, 2004 at 9:00 A.M.**
7. The ARMM Social Fund reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to the award of the contract, without thereby incurring financial or any liability to the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the ARMM Social Fund's action.

(Sgd.) **NAZRULLAH B. MANZUR**
Executive Director

(PDI–April 29 & May 2, 2004)

Region IV welcomes Island Caravan

THE local government units together with the Department of Tourism of Region 4 treated the participants of the "Island Caravan: The Nautical Highway Adventure" to festivities galore.

Multi-colored flags to set up the mood of a grand welcome, festooned the Balatero Pier in Puerto Galera, while the marching band played continuously lifting the sppirits of the visitors. Paying attention to every detail, a sumptuous buffet lunch was served participated in by the local resorts and restaurants.

In the afternoon, several activities were lined up to enable the participants to further appreciate the community. There was a visit to the Mangyan settlement, where Mangyan women showed their skills in basket weaving while the men acted as tour guides trekking the the Talipanan Falls.

The following day in Calapan, caravan participants were fully impressed with the performance of the Sang-Anihan Festival, winner of the Street Dancing competition. At the Anahaw Island Resort, everyone had a taste of their local delicacies Sinipit and Nilupak while they were entertained by the Pangkat Kawayan Cultural Dance Troupe. Trips were also arranged to the Main Heritage Museum and the Sto. Niño Parish Cathedral.

For this summer's "Island Caravan" participants drove from Manila and stopped in the most popular vacation spots like Puerto Galera, Calapan and Boracay, their travel facillitated by the RO/RO ferries.

NFA triples palay procurement in March

The timely positioning of logistics for palay buying and the immediate release of funds for the regional offices enabled the National Food Authority to increase its palay procurement by more than 300 percent in less than a month.

From 62,739 bags procured in February, the volume jumped to 271,360 bags by the third week of this month. The average daily procurement more than doubled from 10,000 bags daily to the present 20,116 per day.

NFA administrator Arthur C. Yap said the upward trend in procurement reflects the general increase in palay production experienced by farmers nationwide.

He noted the data provided by the agency's field offices in their respective buying operations showing that almost all palay producing provinces in Luzon and the Visayas reflected increases in production going up to as high as 105 percent as registered in Ilocos Sur.

The harvest estimates of the standing crop for the first quarter from January to. March indicates a higher figure compared to last year's which can be attributed to factors including the favorable weather, sufficient irrigation, use of certified seeds and Gloria rice varieties.

Harvesting for the first quarter is on its peak in March while that of the second quarter is due late April to May, Yap said.

Aside from the growth in production, Yap also noted that ex- farm price of palay also increased compared to last month's and last year' level. Average ex-farm price for clean and dry palay is reported at P9.60 per kg this month as against the P9.22 per kg in February and P9.31 per kg for the same period last year.

High ex- farm prices for palay have been monitored at P10.60 per kg in Western and at P10.20 per kg in Northern Mindanao.

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TransCo
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD TRANSCO 2004-020

PD Ref. No.: PB040309-EL0038

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO-BAC) – HEAD OFFICE,** invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:

   Schedule I **SUPPLY, DELIVERY & INSTALLATION OF THREE (3) UNITS STAINLESS FUEL TANK (1 LOT)**

   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is P589,428.50 to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.

   Schedule II **SUPPLY, DELIVERY & INSTALLATION OF ONE (1) UNITS STAINLESS WATER TANK (1 LOT)**

   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is P300,000.00 to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting *April 21, 2004 to May 20, 2004* at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) per set
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on *May 6, 2004* at *3:00 p.m.* at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor Transco Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before *10:00 a.m.* of *May 21, 2004* at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Corporation.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI-April 22 & 29. 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY PREQUALIFICATION & TO BID

The Provincial Government of La Union, through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), San Fernando City, La Union, invites suppliers, manufacturers and/or distributors classified accordingly and registered with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) or SEC, to apply for pre-qualification and if qualified to bid for:

QUANTITY	UNIT	DESCRIPTION	ABC
1	unit	**BRAND NEW TRACTOR** SAME 1000.3, 3 Cylinder naturally aspirated Diesel engine, 3000 cc displacement, 60 Hp @2,350 RFM, PTO; 540/1000 RPM, 8 Forward plus 8 Reverse Speeds with Synchronized Invertor Maximum Lifting Capacity-2900 kg. Complete with Rear Swing Drawbar, Safety Frame, Front and Rear Weights	P4,200,000.00
1	unit	**BRAND NEW ROTAVATOR** Made in Malaysia, 5 cm working width, 550 kg. Weight, can be mounted to 45-60 hp tractor, single speed gearbox, chain drive with 48 blades.	
1	unit	**BRAND NEW BACKHOE** Made in Italy. Tractor Power 40-60 Hp, 320 kg. weight. Frame Weight 1100 mm, Tearing Power to the tooth 2000 kgs. PTO Driven	
1	unit	**BRAND NEW FRONT LOADER** Mechanical self-levelling device including Bucket 1800 mm fitting bracket Hydraulic system according to the tractor's features two hydraulic double acting jacks new loader quick release wear-proof brushing impl. Release-quick connectors bucket level gauge-adjustable supporting fee control valve with control stick (joystick) and remote control complete with earth bucket 1800 mm	

Pre-Qualification of Bidders and Submission of Eligibility Requirements	April 29, 2004
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 7, 2004
Pre-Bid Conference	May 11, 2004, 9:00 a.m. Diego Silang Hall
Submission and Opening of Bids	May 24, 2004, 9:15 a.m. Diego Silang Hall

All particulars relative to bonds, pre-bid conference, evaluation of bids, post qualifications, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations, as amended and other applicable rules and regulations

The Provincial Government of La Union reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect contained therein, and to award the suppliers, manufacturers and/or distributors whose proposal as evaluated by the Provincial BAC of La Union the most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN**
Provincial Administrator/
BAC Chairman

(PDI-April 29 & May 7, 2004)

INVITATION FOR BID
ARMM SOCIAL FUND
Loan No. 7153 PH
IFB-ASF-01-2004

April 29, 2004

1. The Government of the Philippines through the ARMM Social Fund (ASF) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) towards the cost of strategic infrastructure component of the ARMM Social Fund (ASF) Project and it intends to apply a portion of this proceeds to cover eligible payments under the contract for the construction of various infrastructure sub-projects. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines : Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.
2. The ARMM Social Fund (ASF) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction/rehabilitation of the hereunder subproject:
   - Sub-Project Code : SRI-SUL-RPF-001
     Title : Rehabilitation and Improvement of Jolo, Base Port
     Project Location : Poblacion, Jolo, Sulu
   - Sub-Project Code : SRI-TAW-RPF-001
     Title : Rehabilitation and Improvement of Bongao Base Port
     Location : Poblacion, Bongao Tawi-tawi
   - Sub-Project Code : SRI-MAG-SSF-001
     Title : Construction of Regional Social Welfare and Development Center
     Location : Brgy. Semba, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at ARMM Social Fund, 3rd Floor VHW (Land Bank) Building, Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City. Telephone Numbers: (062) 992-2684-86 & 992-2706, Fax No: 991-9410, E-mail: ASF@mozcom.com
4. A complete set of bidding documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of non-refundable fee of *Php3,500.00* or its equivalent in a fully convertible currency, for each set starting **May 3, 2004**. The method of payment will be on cash basis only.
5. Bids shall be valid for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days after bid opening and must be delivered and will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representative who choose to attend at **10:00 A.M. on June 1, 2004** at ASF Conference Room, 3rd Floor, VHW (Land Bank) Bldg., Veterans Avenue, Zamboanga City and must be accompanied by a minimum bid security of at least 2.5% of the total bid amount in the form of cash, certified check, or bank guarantee drawn against a Bank acceptable to the ASF to expire thirty (30) calendar days beyond bid validity.
6. Interested bidders are invited to attend a Pre-Bid Conference to be held at ASF Office on **May 11, 2004 at 9:00 AM.**
7. The ARMM Social Fund reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to the award of the contract, without thereby incurring financial or any liability to the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the ARMM Social Fund's action.

(Sgd.) **NAZRULLAH B. MANZUR**
Executive Director

(PDI – April 29 & May 2, 2004)

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PPMC)** is inviting all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to submit bid if eligible, to provide security services.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of P5,015,863.148 shall come from PPMC corporate funds.

Eligibility Statement Forms, Terms of Reference and Bid Documents shall be made available to interested firms on the date and place mentioned below upon payment of a non-refundable amount of one thousand pesos (P1,000.00).

Schedule of Procurement Activities:

Activity	Dates	Time	Place
Issuance of Eligibility Statement Forms, TOR and Bid Documents	May 14, 2004	8:00 a.m - 5:00 p.m.	PPMC Admin Bldg Pennsylvania Ave , Poro Point San Fernando City, La Union
Pre-Bid Conference	May 17, 2004	2:00 p.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union
Submission and Opening of Eligibility Statement Forms and Bids	June 8, 2004	9.00 a.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union

Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria. Only the bids of the eligible firms shall be opened. All bids shall be evaluated in accordance with RA 9184 and its IRR.

Should you need any further information or clarification regarding the required services, you may contact Major Joel G. Caringal at telephone no. (072) 888-5955.

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT**
Chairman, BAC

(PDI April 29 & May 6, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The public is hereby notified that **MR. ROMAN "ROY" L. MAURICIO**, whose last known address is Sollera, Pandayan, Meycauayan, Bulacan and whose picture appears above, is accused of committing two (2) counts of **ESTAFA THRU FALSIFICATION OF COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTS** in Criminal Case Nos. 650-M-99 and 651-M-99, pending before Branch 9 of the Regional Trial Court at Malolos, Bulacan.

The trial court has issued a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Mauricio. Anyone who has information on the whereabouts of Mr. Mauricio that may lead to his arrest may call Tel. Nos. (045) 963-25-25 local 558 or 559.

(PDI-April 29, 2004)

UNITED PULP AND PAPER COMPANY, INC.

UPPC

NOTICE OF SALE OF DELINQUENT SHARES OF STOCK

Notice is hereby given that the following delinquent shares of stock in United Pulp and Paper Company, Inc. will be sold at public auction to such bidders who shall offer to pay the full amount of the balance on the subscriptions together with accrued interest, cost of advertisement and expenses of sale, for the smallest number of shares or fraction of a share in accordance with Section 68 of the Corporation Code.

The following stocks covered by unpaid subscriptions have become delinquent as of April 15, 2004 and will be subject for sale on May 17, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the office of the Corporation located at the 5th Floor of the Phinma Plaza, 39 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City:

Subscribers	Number of Shares	Balance due on subscription
Alsons Consolidated Resources, Inc.	594,196	P10,695,528
Drury Realty Corporation	78,660	1,415,880
Pampanga Sugar Development Company	52,440	743,920
Michael Escaler	21,413	179,869
Ricarte Santos	4,764	85,752

Makati, Metro Manila, April 20, 2004

(Sgd.) **JUAN J. DIAZ**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--April 29 & May 6, 2004)

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
SPECIAL EVENTS FOR LABOR DAY - May 1, 2004

REGION	ACTIVITY/ VENUE	CONTACT PERSON
NCR	**Family Day & Medical Mission**- Occupational Safety & Health Center (OSHC), North Avenue, Quezon City	Fatima Dela Peña 834-0717
	Jobs Fair-Freedom Triangle, Taft Avenue, Arroceros, Manila	Niki Rubia – 400-6241
CAR	**Family Day, Medical Mission, Jobs Fair**-SM City BAGUIO	Evelyn Laranang (74) 445-2260
I	**Family Day, Medical Mission & Jobs Fair** - Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU), Apilado Hall, San Fernando, La Union	Esperanza Cobarrubias (72) 242-1825 (72) 700-2521
II	**Family Day, Medical Mission & Jobs Fair** – Cagayan National High School Compound, Tuguegarao	DOLE Tuguegarao (78) 844-1575/ 1364
III	**Family Day & Medical Mission**- SM City Pampanga	DOLE Pampanga (45) 961-3910
	Jobs Fair – Provincial Capitol Gym, Iba, Zambales	
IV-A	**Family Day & Medical Mission** - Bucal Elementary School Gym, Brgy. Bucal, Calamba, Laguna	DOLE Calamba (49) 545-7358
	Jobs Fair – Pacita Satellite Office, San Pedro, Laguna	
IV-B	**Family Day & Medical Mission** -City Piso Training Center,Valencia St., Puerto Prinsesa City, Palawan	Florante Magay (48) 433-2208
	Jobs Fair April 30- May 1– DOLE Regional Office IV-B, 3rd Floor, BENLOR Bldg., Quezon Avenue, Quezon City	Raymond B. Rosales 301-0182 to 83
V	**Family Day, Medical Mission & Jobs Fair** LANDCO Business Park, Legazpi City	Larry Zaragoza (52) 820-0828
VI	**Family Day & Medical Mission** - SM City ILOILO	DOLE Iloilo Office (33) 320-8023
	Jobs Fair – Provincial Capitol, Iloilo City	
VII	**Family Day** - Cebu Coliseum, Cebu City	Mae D. Codilla (32) 255-3179
	Medical Mission – Cebu City Sports Center (Covered Gym)	
	Jobs Fair (local) - Provincial Capitol, Cebu City	DOLE Cebu Office (32) 253-0638
	Jobs Fair May 1-2 (overseas) – National Sports Complex, Abellana National High School, Cebu City	
VIII	**Family Day & Medical Mission** - DOLE Region 8 Office, Trece Martirez, Tacloban City	DOLE Tacloban City (53) 325-9491
	Jobs Fair – Leyte Sports center, Tacloban City	
IX	**Family Day & Medical Mission** – Golf Course Beach Resort, Zamboanga City	DOLE Zamboanga City (62) 993-1877
	Jobs Fair – Social Development Center, Zamboanga City	
X	**Family Day & Medical Mission**-SM City Cagayan de Oro	DOLE Cagayan de Oro (88) 857-2218
	Jobs Fair– Entrance 2, Limketkai Mall, Cagayan de Oro City	
XI	**Family Day & Medical Mission** – University of Mindanao Gym, Matina, Davao City	DOLE Davao City (82) 227-8772
	Jobs Fair April 30- May 1 – Gaisano Mall, Davao City	
XII	**Medical Mission/ Jobs Fair** - DOLE Region 12 Office AYS Bldg., 171 Sinsuat Avenue, Cotabato City	DOLE Cotabato City (64) 421-3348
	Family Day & Medical Mission – Bilon Garden Catering Services, Cotabato City	
CARAGA	**Family Day**- St. Peter Seminary Recreation Center, Butuan	DOLE Butuan City (85) 341-3198
	Medical Mission/ Jobs Fair – DOLE CARAGA Office 3rd Floor LCT Bldg., P. Burgos St., Butuan City	

CALLING ALL ALUMNI OF ANS BATCH 1977

General Reunion on April 30, 2004
at the METROPOLIS COURT HOTEL,
Guadalupe, Cebu at 7:00 p.m.

Contact person for details:

Cebu : **Cecile Lopez**, Tel. No. (032) 414-7025, cell no. 0920-922-3087;
Manila : **Cergen**, Tel. No. 813-5688, cell no. 0920-922-3087

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Mortuary and Crematory opening soon!

ANGELO JOSUE B. LUBAG, SR.

peacefully joined his Creator on April 25, 2004 at the age of 60.

His wife **Leticia G. Mercado, M.D.**; children **Amihan** and **Apollo Arquiza**, **Angelo Jr.** and **Kahdija**, **Dakila**, **Magtanggol** and **Annaliza**, and **Pag-asa**; grandchild **Miguel Adrian**, and other loved ones request you to join them in celebrating Angelo's coming home to the Lord.

His remains lie in state at his home in Ibayo Silangan, Naic, Cavite.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 1, 2004 at Sanctuary Memorial Park, Naic, Cavite after the 2 p.m. service at the Lubag residence.

MARINA YLAGAN VDA. DE INTENGAN

Peacefully joined her Creator on April 27, 2004 at the age of 91.

She is survived by her children **BOBBY & MARILYN ESTRADA**, **MONET & ROCHIE JIMENEZ**; **SANDRA INTENGAN**; **PEEWEE & DON LUDAHL** & grandchildren **RAMONITO**, **AYANNA** & great grandchildren **NICHOLAS & JONAH**.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

We design OBITUARIES for free.

"Earth is not our final Home, we were created for something much better" — **Rick Warren**

ATTY. MANUEL M. VELOSO

of San Miguel, Leyte and Marikina City

Peacefully joined our Lord on April 23, 2004 at the age of 75.

His loving children **Wick & Arlene Veloso**; grandchildren **Katrina, Kristia, Paolo & Miggy**; and loving brother request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Sanctuario de San Antonio.

Mass of the resurrection will be held on Friday, April 30, 2004 at 7:30 a.m.

Cremation will follow at Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
Matthew 10:39

Now she is gone like a flight of wild birds
Courage and loyalty, humor and pride
These are the weapons she used till she died
Love gives life meaning in a look, in a breach,
But never so truly, or deeply as death.

So Fondly Remembered
3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY

VIRGINIA "Nini" C. SY GRAPILON

January 03, 1949 – April 29, 2001
of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro;
Pawikan, Cabucgayan, Biliran and Carigara, Leyte

jag, **René** and **Miranda** (nee **de Quiros**), **Raúl** and relatives thank all those who continue to reminisce about Nini's kind heart and compassionate soul. We are eternally grateful.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

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Speaker: Reggie Gines, Managing Consultant

[illegible]
10 AM "Closing the Deal through Your Job Interview"
Speaker: Alina Manaig, Managing Consultant
11 AM "Discover Yourself through GENesys"
Speaker: Mawi Acosta, Supervising Consultant

[illegible]
10 AM "Reaching the Top in a Jiffy"
Speaker: Grace Sorongon, VP/Consumer & Technology Services
11 AM "Speak English Well and Get Hired"
Speaker: Rocky Peltzman, Certified English As a Second Language

Venue: Glorietta 4, Cinema 4
Time: 10 AM to 12 NN

Attend this FREE three-day seminar series and be on your way to a successful career. Plus, certified John Clements Consultants will be available for FREE resumé review/analysis, interview tips and counseling.

This event will be simultaneously held with Job Market's JOBZ: Employment Expo 2004 at the Glorietta Activity Center on May 4 to 6,2004.

Philippine Daily Inquirer
MESSAGEBOARD

Mother's Day Treat

Warm your mom's heart with your deeply felt love note telling her how special she is to you.

On **May 9, Mother's Day,** INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS, the widest reaching classifieds, will highlight a **"Mother's Day special section"** for personal ads dedicated to the first woman in all our lives.

Nanay Margie,

There's never been a minute I wasn't glad you were my mom.

Lufi Boy

1 col X 5 cm = P 500

Mom Junie,
You're the best!

JM & Hamma

1 col X 2 cm = P 100

Mama Karen,

Thanks for all you do.

Micro, Nicole, Gabby AJ & Christion

1col X 3 cm = P 200

Mommy Lita,

Thank you for always helping us to remember what is important in life...
and today it is YOU!

Happy Mother's Day!

Irah, Basti and Pauline

2col X 8 cm = P 1,500

Mommy Tess,

If there was a day for everything you have given me as a mother, it would be Mother's day everyday. I love you very much!

Chris

2 col X 5 cm = P 1,000

Mommy Rita,

Thank you for always being there. Happy Mother's Day!

Kobo & Niki

2col X 3 cm = P 500

Take advantage of this offer and this will surely be one of the BEST gifts your mom will ever receive and cherish. For more info, you may visit or call any Inquirer branch.

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and bank-to-bank payments

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

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JOB *Market*

The company that pioneered the search industry in the Philippines – **John Clements Consultants, Inc.** - brings forth **John Clements Management Seminar Series**. Your **FREE** comprehensive guide on how to land your dream job and attain corporate success.

10 AM "1001 Jobs That You Can Get Into"
Speaker: Maris Aguila, Group Managing Consultant
11 AM "Sure Fire to Land a Job through Your Winning Resume"
Speaker: Reggie Gines, Managing Consultant

10 AM "Closing the Deal through Your Job Interview"
Speaker: Alina Manaig, Managing Consultant
11 AM "Discover Yourself through GENesys"
Speaker: Mawi Acosta, Supervising Consultant

10 AM "Reaching the Top in a Jiffy"
Speaker: Grace Sorongon, VP/Consumer & Technology Services
11 AM "Speak English Well and Get Hired"
Speaker: Rocky Peltzman, Certified English As a Second Language

Venue: Glorietta 4, Cinema 4
Time: 10 AM to 12 NN

Attend this FREE three-day seminar series and be on your way to a successful career. Plus, certified John Clements Consultants will be available for FREE resumé review/analysis, interview tips and counseling.

This event will be simultaneously held with Job Market's JOBZ: Employment Expo 2004 at the Glorietta Activity Center on May 4 to 6, 2004.

Philippine Daily Inquirer
MESSAGEBOARD

Mother's Day Treat

Warm your mom's heart with your deeply felt love note telling her how special she is to you.

On **May 9, Mother's Day**, INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS, the widest reaching classifieds, will highlight a **"Mother's Day special section"** for personal ads dedicated to the first woman in all our lives.

Nanay Magie,

There never been a minute I wasn't glad you were my mom.

Tuli Boy

1 col X 5 cm = P 500

Mom Junie,
You're the best!
JM & Hamma

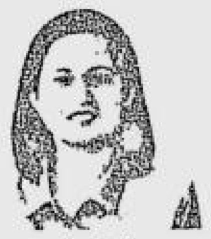
1 col X 2 cm = P 100

Mama Karen,

Thanks for all you do.

Micro, Nicole, Gabby AJ & Christion

1col X 3 cm = P 200



Mommy Lita,

Thank you for always helping us to remember what is important in life
and today it is YOU!

Happy Mother's Day!

Irah, Basti and Pauline

2col X 8 cm = P 1,500

Mommy Tess,

If there was a day for every thing you have given me as a mother, it would be Mother's day everyday. I love you very much!

Chris

2 col X 5 cm = P 1,000

Mommy Rita,

Thank you for always being there
Happy Mother's Day!

Kobo & Niki

2col X 3 cm = P 500

Take advantage of this offer and this will surely be one of the BEST gifts your mom will ever receive and cherish. For more info, you may visit or call any Inquirer branch.

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e-mail
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MAKATI AVENUE
MAKATI CITY
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CUBAO QC
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635 0220
e-mail
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T.M. KALAW ST
ERMITA MANILA
☎ 527 3342 · 528-0183
528 0186
528-0213
e-mail
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PROVINCIAL BRANCH:
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YAGUE & MASCARDO ST
MAKATI CITY
☎ 897 8808 loc. 243
☎ 899-4427 (Direct)
8978425
e-mail
[illegible]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL
6331981

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PAYCHECK
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 PETA
5 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
6 MAN ON FIRE
7 HAUNTED SPIRIT
8 BOOBITA ROSE
9 SCHOOL OF ROCK
10 HELLBOY
11 TAKING LIVES
12 ANIMAL

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 PAYCHECK
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 SPARTAN
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 MAN ON FIRE
6 HELLBOY
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK
8 PETER PAN
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 HAUNTED SPIRIT
11 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
12 ANIMAL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 MAN ON FIRE
2 STARSKY & HUTCH
3 SPARTAN
4 HELLBOY
5 PETER PAN
6 PAYCHECK
7 ANIMAL
8 SCHOOL OF ROCK
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 HAUNTED SIPIRIT
11 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
12 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 HELLBOY
5 PAYCHECK
6 PETER PAN
7 STARSKY & HUTCH
8 MAN ON FIRE

SM CITY STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 MAN ON FIRE
2 PAYCHECK
3 HELLBOY
4 PETER PAN
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 SPARTAN
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK
8 BOOBITA ROSE
9 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
10 ANIMAL

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 HELLBOY
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 ANIMAL

North

SM CITY MARILAO
(044) 933 2013 to 17

1 HELLBOY
2 TAKING LIVES
3 THE CURSE
4 STARSKY & HUTCH

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 PETER PAN
2 HELLBOY
3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
4 CHECK INN
5 BOOBITA ROSE
6 STARSKY & HUTCH

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 HELLBOY
2 TAKING LIVES
3 GRUDGE 2
4 PAYCHECK

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066988

1 HELLBOY
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
5 PAYCHECK
6 SPARTAN
7 HAUNTED SPIRIT
8 MAN ON FIRE
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 ANIMAL

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763055

1 STARSKY & HUTCH
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
4 HELLBOY

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 SCHOOL OF ROCK
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 HELLBOY

SM CITY BACOOR
(046)4173868

1 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 MAN ON FIRE
4 HAUNTED SPIRIT
5 HELLBOY
6 STARSKY & HUTCH
7 ANIMAL
8 BOOBITA ROSE

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108977-80

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE CURSE
3 GRUDGE 2
4 PAYCHECK

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
(032) 2313876

1 TAKING LIVES
2 50 FIRST DATES
3 PETER PAN
4 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
5 DRAGON VS. NINJA
6 CHECK INN
7 BOOBITA ROSE
8 PAYCHECK

SM CITY ILOILO
(033) 3209422

1 SORUM
2 RESERVED
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HIGHWAYMEN
5 PETER PAN
6 PAYCHECK
7 RESERVED
8 GRUDGE 2

SM CITY DAVAO
(082) 2976998

1 PETER PAN
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 DEATH CURSE
5 TAKING LIVES
6 PAYCHECK

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592884

1 PETER PAN
2 ACACIA
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PAYCHECK

—THE— PODIUM CINEMA

1
MAN ON FIRE
11:10 FS/11:40
MF/2:30/5:20/8:10/10:35
LFS/11:00 LMF/1:25 END

2
STARSKY & HUTCH
11:15 FS/11:45
MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/
10:30 LFS/11:00
LMF/12:45 END

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SM CINEMA

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DENZEL WASHINGTON
MAN ON FIRE
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MMTA

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MOVIE GUIDE

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS) TAKING LIVES
2 (SDDS) HELLBOY
3 (DTS) PAY CHECK
4 GOLD (DTS) PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 GOLD (DOLBY) WHOLE 10 YARD
6 GOLD (SDDS) STARSKY & HUTCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MAN OF FIRE
8 [illegible] BOOBITA ROSE
9 [illegible] SCHOOL OF ROCK
10 [illegible] PETER PAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) HELLBOY
2 (DOLBY) MAN OF FIRE
3 (DOLBY) STARSKY & HUTCH
4 (DOLBY) SCHOOL OF ROCK

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274

1 ANIMAL
2 STARSKY & HUTCH
3 HELLBOY

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
MAN OF FIRE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ANIMAL
5

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 ANIMAL
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 HELLBOY
5 WHOLE 10 YARD
6 SCHOOL OF ROCK

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1 ANIMAL
2 ACACIA

PREMIERE CINEMA
THX
(Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1
2
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

5 RESERVE
6
7 (DTS)
8 (SDDS)
9 (DOLBY)

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
3 CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
4 (SDDS) HELLBOY
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 (DOLBY) ANIMAL
7 (DTS) MAN OF FIRE
8 SCHOOL OF ROCK
9 BOOBITA ROSE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 RESERVE
2 (SDDS)
3 (DTS)
4 (DOLBY)
5

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 SPARTAN
3 (DTS) WHOLE 10 YARD
4 ANIMAL
5 (SDDS) HELLBOY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson CARMEN
Lords DOUBLE SEDUCCTIO

MARRIETAF
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 MAN ON FIRE
2 STARSKY & HUTCH
3 ANIMAL
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY) WHOLE 10 YARD
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 ANIMAL
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 HELLBO

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 ANIMAL
2 TORQUE

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center

Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
Tel No. 911-3101 Loc. 911-8342-8400

1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) MAN OF FIRE
4 (SDDS) STARSKY & HUTCH
5 (DTS) WHOLE 10 YARD
6 HELLBOY
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) HELLBO
2 ACACIA
3 (DTS EX) PETER PAN
4 STARSKY & HUTC

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 HELLBOY
3 (DOLBY) PETER PAN
4 BOOBITA ROSE

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIS
2 BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DOLBY) REPLICATE
4 [illegible] EMPERORS CLUB

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1 STARSKY & HUTCH
2 ANIMAL
3 (DTS) HELLBOY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 (DTS) STARSKY & HUTCH
3 (DOLBY) HELLBOY
4 UNINVITED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 (DOLBY) HELLBO
3 (DTS) MAN OF FIR
4 UNINVITE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 BOOBITA ROS
2 PASSION OF CHRIST
3 (DOLBY) UNINVITED

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 HELLBO
3 (DOLBY) BONE SNATCHERS
4 (DTS) PASSION OF CHRIS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1 PETER PAN
2 TAKING LIVE
3 HELLBO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) HIGHWAY ME
2 ANIMA
3 TEENAGE SEDUCTIO
4 (DTS) LOVE KITA BILIB KA B

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) HELLBO
2 ANIMA
3 [illegible] MAN OF FIR
4 UNINVITE
5 STARSKY & HUTC

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Binan) tel (049) 511.8883

1 ANIMA
2 MAN OF FIR

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 MAN OF FIR
3 ANIMA

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 PASSION OF CHRIS
2 BOOBITA ROS
3 (DTS) BONE SNATCHER
4 (DOLBY) CHECK - IN

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS) RESERV

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CHECK - IN
2 HELLBO
3 TWISTE
4 PASSION OF CHRIS

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1 ANIMA
2 VIRGIN PEOPL

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL
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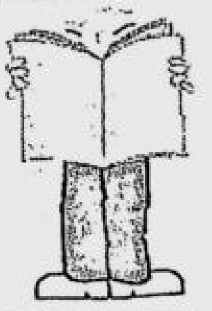

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	HELLBOY
Ali 4	SPARTAN
Ali 5	PAYCHECK
Ali 6	TWISTED
Ali 7	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

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MAY 2	PBA : RED BULL VS. FEDEX
MAY 3	AMA GRADUATION
MAY 4	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAY 5	PBA : ALASKA VS. STA. LUCIA
MAY 6	NCA7-COCK DERBY
MAY 9	PBA: FEDEX VS. SHELL
MAY 12	PBA · STA. LUCIA VS GINEBRA

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

VAN HELSING

Universal's Biggest Film Todate.

-Richard Verrier, Los Angeles Times Hollywood

Universal Pictures is hoping to bring good things back to life.

For Universal Pictures, *Van Helsing* is about both the future and the past.

The Dracula, Frankenstein's monster and Wolf Man characters, brought to life by Hollywood acting legends Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff and Lon Chaney Jr., helped build the Universal empire in the 1930s and '40s.

"These are the crown jewels of the Universal library," said Universal vice-chairman Marc Shmuger. "They were just sitting on the shelves and a little bit neglected for a long time."

No more. The monsters are being brought back with a vengeance, which analysts say makes economic sense — so long as Van Helsing makes money.

With expectations so high, studio executives have been loath to over-hype the movie, though they have spent $30 million to pump it and bought commercials during the Super Bowl..

From the director of The Mummy and The Mummy Returns, which in total reaped more than $800 million worldwide, Stephen Sommers now brings you VAN HELSING.

"There are very few filmmakers, if any, that we would entrust the legacy of our monsters to besides Stephen," Shmuger said. "Stephen has delivered for us twice before."

Added Scott Stuber, vice-chairman of worldwide production at Universal Pictures. "Obviously, this is an extremely important movie. We're confident we've got a terrific film."

Starring Hugh Jackman and Kate Beckinsale, **Van Helsing** will face little competition when it opens first week of May .

The movie's budget, which was originally set at just under Usd$160 million (insiders placed it at Usd 200m today), drew heavy scrutiny. To reduce costs, Sommers gave up his upfront fee and the studio filmed more scenes in Prague, where it is less expensive than filming in Los Angeles.

As much as it is steeped in the studio's history, Van Helsing also could play a big role in the whole company's future.

With so much riding on both Universal's legacy and Sommers' USD$200 million film — one of the most expensive in the studio's history — Universal has launched what it calls "an unprecedented, companywide synergistic marketing effort to launch 'Van Helsing' worldwide and celebrate the studio's legacy."

ADVT

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JOB Market

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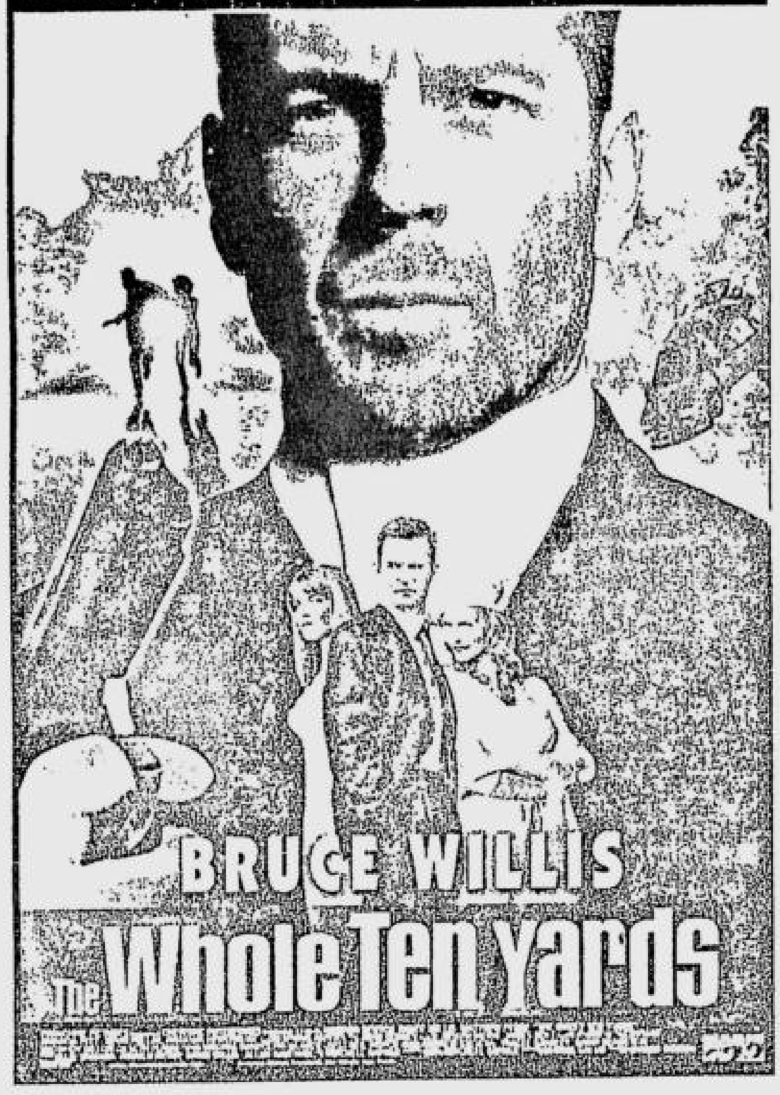

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

HELLBOY PG13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	SCHOOL OF ROCK PG13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	STARSKY AND HUTCH PG13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10
WHOLE TEN YARDS R13 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:10, 10:10	SPARTAN PG13 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30	MAN OF FIRE R18 12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:20

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

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CINEMA 1
MAN ON FIRE
10:40, 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00
R18

CINEMA 2
STARSKY & HUTCH
10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
P13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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MAY 6, 7 & 8	"IL DIVINO"	8:00 PM

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EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972

RESERVED SEATING

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 **HELLBOY**
11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30
PG 13

2 **MAN ON FIRE**
11.00, 1.55, 4:55
7:55, 10.00
R-18

3 **STARSKY & HUTCH**
11:40, 1:50, 4:00
6:10, 8:20, 10:30
PG 13

4 **SCHOOL OF ROCK**
12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
PG 13

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Consumer's Quality Award 2003

Family Consumers
Choice Award 2003

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GALLERIA
632-9115 to 16 / 687-0593

CINEMA 1 THX
HELLBOY
11:20, 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40

2 **THE WHOLE TEN YARDS** 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7 35, 9 50
3 **MAN OF FIRE** 10 15, 1 10, 4 05, 7 00, 9 55
4 **PAYCHECK** 11:35, 1 50, 4 05, 6 20, 8 35, 10.30
5 **STARSKY AND HUTCH** 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7 35, 9 50
6 **SCHOOL OF ROCK** 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7.30, 9 00
7 **MASIKIP SA DIBDIB** 11 55, 2 05, 4 15, 6 25, 8 35, 10 30
8 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST** 12 40, 3 20, 6 10, 9 00
9 **HAUNTED SPIRIT** 12 20, 2 25, 4 30, 6 35, 8 40, 10 30
10 **SPARTAN** 12 40, 3 00, 5 20, 7.40, 10 00

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA
526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1 **HELLBOY** 11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
2 **HAUNTED SPIRIT** 11 15, 1 05, 2 55, 4 45, 6 35, 8 25, 10.00
3 **MASIKIP SA DIBDIB** 10 50, 1 00, 3 10, 5 20, 7 30, 9 40
4 **MAN ON FIRE** 10 10, 1 00, 3 50, 6 40, 9 50
5 **SCHOOL OF ROCK** 10 50, 1 00, 3 10, 5 20, 7 30, 9 40
6 **STARSKY AND HUTCH** 10 10, 12 25, 2 40, 4 55, 7 10, 9.40
7 **THE WHOLE TEN YARDS** 10 30, 12 25, 2 20, 4 15, 6 10, 8 05, 10 00

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST
682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 **STARSKY AND HUTCH** 11:10, 1 40, 4 10, 6 40, 9 10
2 **MAN ON FIRE** 12 00, 3 00, 6 00, 9 00
3 **ANIMAL** 10 50, 12:50, 2.50, 4.50, 6 50, 9 00
4 **THE WHOLE TEN YARDS** 11 50, 2.10, 2 50, 4.30, 6 50, 9 10
5 **HELLBOY** 10 05, 12.05, 2 15, 4.25, 6:40, 9.00
6 **SCHOOL OF ROCK** 10 05, 12 05, 2 15, 4 25, 6 40, 9 00
7 **PAYCHECK** 10 10, 12 20, 2 30, 4 40, 6.50, 9.10
8 **MASIKIP SA DIBDIB** 11 00, 1 00, 3 00, 5 00, 7 00, 9 00

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1 **SCHOOL OF ROCK** 11 35, 1.40, 3 45, 5 50, 8 10
2 **HELLBOY** 1.35, 3 50, 6 05, 8 30
3 **STARSKY AND HUTCH** 11 20, 1 35, 3 50, 6 05, 8 30
4 **MAN ON FIRE** 11 45, 2 35, 5 25, 8.30
5 **THE WHOLE TEN YARDS** 12 00, 2 00, 4 00, 6 00, 8 10
6 **HAUNTED SPIRIT** 12 00, 2 00, 4 00, 6 00, 8 10
7 **PAYCHECK** 10:20, 12 45, 3 10, 5 35, 8 10
8 **MASIKIP SA DIBDIB** 11 35, 1 40, 3 45, 5 50, 8 10

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1 MAN OF FIRE
2 STARSKY AND HUTCH
3 SCHOOL OF ROCK
4 ANIMAL

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1 MAN OF FIRE
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 ANIMAL
4 STARSKY AND HUTCH

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1 HELLBOY
2 STARSKY AND HUTCH
3 ANIMAL
4 THE UNINVITED
5 MAN ON FIRE

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1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE UNINVITED
3 TWISTED
4 CHECK-INN
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1 MAN OF FIRE
2 KARIBAL
3 STARSKY AND HUTCH
4 PETER PAN
5 HELLBOY

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2 CHECK-INN
3 THE MISSING
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 STARSKY AND HUTCH
6 HELLBOY

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1 HELLBOY
2 THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
3 STARSKY AND HUTCH
4 MAN ON FIRE
5 SCHOOL OF ROCK
6 ANIMAL

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1 PAYCHECK
2 PETER PAN
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
6 50 FIRST DATES

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1 PAYCHECK
2 PETER PAN
3 THE HIGHWAYMEN
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SUROM
6 THE GRUDGE 2

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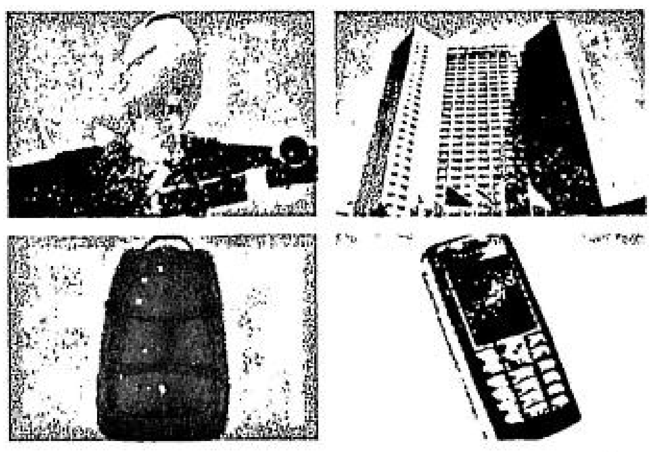

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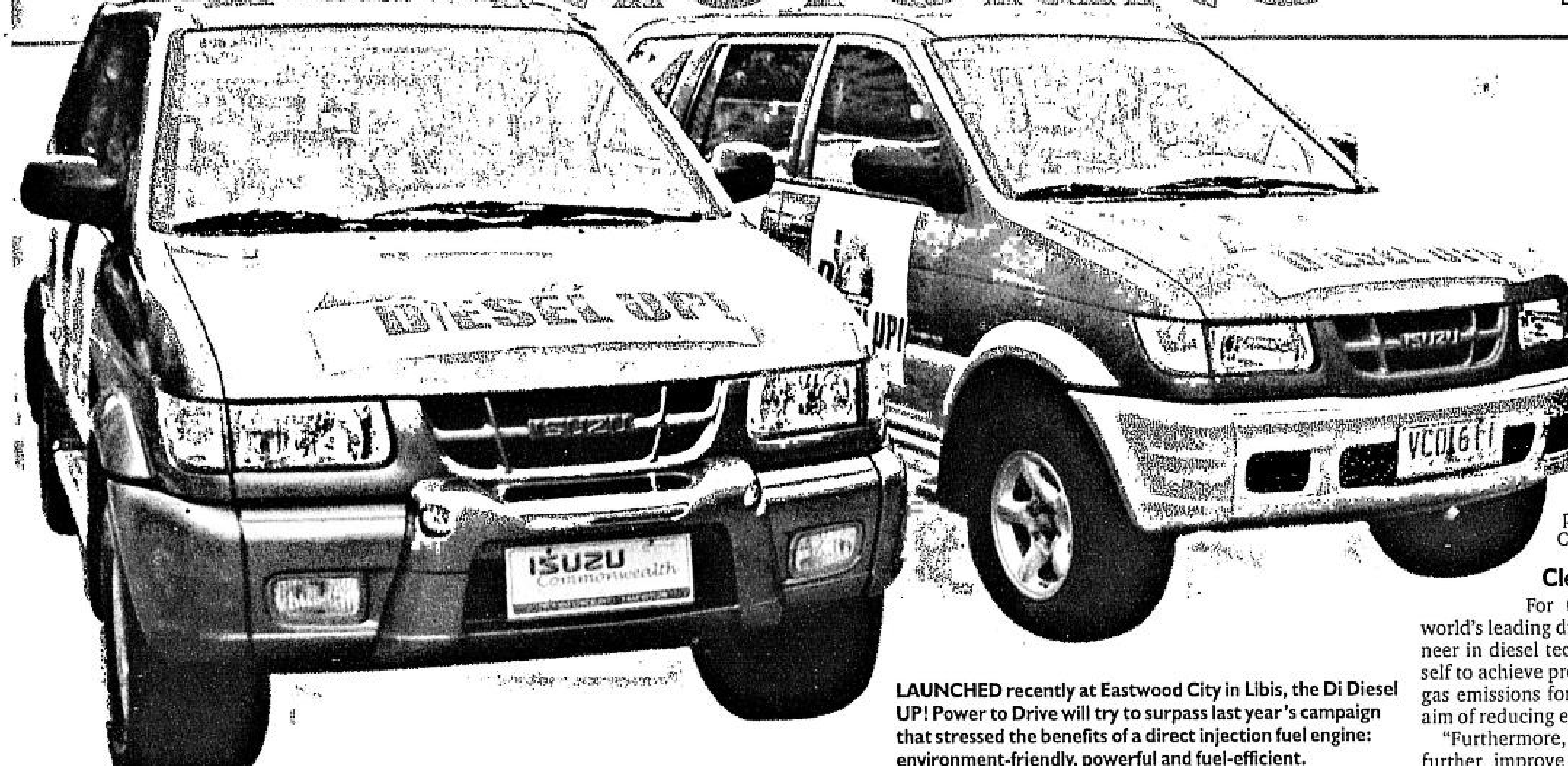
MOTORING

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang



LAUNCHED recently at Eastwood City in Libis, the Di Diesel UP! Power to Drive will try to surpass last year's campaign that stressed the benefits of a direct injection fuel engine: environment-friendly, powerful and fuel-efficient.

Isuzu steps up Di diesel engine campaign

Isuzu has challenged itself to achieve progressively cleaner exhaust gas emissions

Text and photo
by Charles E. Buban

DESPITE the unfavorable publicity the diesel engine is getting in some parts of the world (Japan and North America), it has remained an indispensable power source for trucks, buses, trains, ships and off-road machines like generators, farm and home equipment.

Invented more than a century ago, the diesel engine is an extremely flexible internal combustion system that is known for its relatively low carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, as well as powerful torque even at low speeds, high durability and fuel economy.

But there's one important caveat: diesel engines produces higher emissions of particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) contributing to environmental pollution problems worldwide.

SPREADING the good news, the IPC team will visit companies for refresher courses on vehicle maintenance and Di diesel technology.

"Since the diesel engine moves a large portion of the world's goods, powers much of the world's equipment, and generates electricity more economically than any other device in their size range, removing it completely is not an option," explained Isuzu Philippines Corp. EVP Kazuhiko Sho.

Cleaner emissions

For these reasons, Isuzu, the world's leading diesel engine maker and pioneer in diesel technology has challenged itself to achieve progressively cleaner exhaust gas emissions for its diesel engine with the aim of reducing emissions of PM and NOx.

"Furthermore, Isuzu is also attempting to further improve its (diesel engine's) high performance and durability," informed IPC marketing and sales division VP Ken Takashima.

In joining this worldwide program, IPC is following up its last year's campaign with this year's Di (direct injection) Diesel Up! Power to Drive to further stress the benefits of using diesel engine, especially the ones developed by Isuzu.

"We want to educate the public as well as our buyers on the advantages of Di diesel engine, which is why we have included for this year's campaign refresher courses on vehicle maintenance and Di diesel technology with driving clinic to different companies," informed IPC senior manager for corporate affairs Myrna Gonzales.

P100,000 prize pot

Gonzales also added that there's also a Power Stick N' Win raffle promo that gives lucky vehicle owners a chance to win P100,000 and other prize items by just posting the exclusive Di Diesel Up stickers on their vehicle.

"Isuzu vehicle owners can also participate in the Power Km Face-Off that gives them a chance to win P10,000 if they garner the highest kilometer reading in the category(ies) they will be joining," she added.

Winners from these events will be announced during the Power to Drive culminating bash on July 17 at the Boomland, CCP Complex.

The Isuzu Di Diesel Up Power to Drive campaign is in partnership with Caltex Power Diesel and Delo Sports and co-sponsored by Bevida Distilled Water, Kleenex, Club Panoly-Boracay, Snickers, and Escondido Resort-Boracay.

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The best cars of 2004

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

FOR CREDIBILITY and depth in the testing of automobiles, no organization beats the Consumers Union of US Inc. (CU), which publishes Consumer Reports magazine. Consumer Reports, the only major auto-testing publication or website that does not accept advertising or freebies, has been testing autos for 68 years. CU does not borrow vehicles for testing, they buy them anonymously from dealerships. In 2003 alone, CU spent $1.9 million on test vehicles.

In its April 2004 Consumer Reports Annual Auto Issue, CU described its auto-testing program. CU uses a dedicated, specially equipped 132-hectare auto-test facility staffed by a team of full-time auto and tire engineers. Each vehicle is evaluated for months, pushed to its limits at CU's track and driven for 6,000 to 8,000 miles (9,656 km to 12,874 km) in everyday conditions. More than 40 individual tests are performed on every vehicle, including evaluations of performance, comfort, convenience, safety, fuel economy, interior quality and cargo capacity.

Check mark

"We measure trunk space with suitcases, so we can tell you what will really fit inside," CU president Jim Guest says.

"We measure reach, width and illumination patterns of headlights, but we consult moon charts first. How else would we determine which are the darkest, most scientifically appropriate nights for headlight testing?"

By the time a car earns CU's "Recommended" check mark, it has been track-tested and road-tested, analyzed for reliability plus accident-avoidance performance and crash- and rollover-test results factored in if the vehicle has been crash-tested by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a government agency, and/or the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), which is sponsored by the insurance industry.

Guest emphasizes that unlike one competitor, which sells its seal of approval to car manufacturers for use in their advertising, CU does not put its "Recommended" check mark up for sale. Even if a vehicle performs well for CU and in crash tests, it will not get the "Recommended" check mark if it does not achieve average or better reliability. To reckon the reliability of a particular car, CU conducts a yearly survey of subscribers' experiences with their cars. CU's latest Annual Questionnaire drew responses for 675,000 subscriber-owned vehicles covering 14 trouble spots over eight model years. As Guest points out, "The reliability data we present are broader than anything else available and come from the deepest pool of actual consumer experience."

HONDA Accord: top pick in the 4-cylinder family sedan category

Top picks

To merit CU's "Top Pick" in its category, a vehicle has to be an all-around high performer that scored the best among its competitors in CU's rigorous 40-point testing program, showed average or better reliability per CU's latest subscriber survey and performed adequately if crash-tested by the NHTSA and/or the IIHS. In this year's Top Picks, CU added a tenth category: SUVs with three-row seating, an option for families that need to seat seven or eight but don't want a minivan.

Chosen from 183 vehicles tested recently, the 2004 Top Picks in the 10 categories are: **Small Sedan**—Ford Focus ZTS, with Honda Civic and Toyota Corolla as runners-up; **Family Sedan**—Honda Accord for 4-cylinder cars and VW Passat for V6 models with Toyota Camry as another good choice; **Upscale Sedan**—the redesigned Acura TL, with BMW 330i a close second and Lexus IS300 third; **Luxury Sedan**—the Lexus LS430 V8 was best here; **Sporty/Fun to Drive**—Ford SVT Focus hatchback, followed by Subaru Impreza WRX and its STi variant as close second choices; **Small SUV**—Subaru Forester 2.5X AWD, with Toyota RAV4 as runner-up; **Midsized SUV**—Lexus RX330 230-hp V6, followed by Toyota Highlander Limited V6; **Three-Row SUV**—Honda Pilot V6 topped this new category; **Minivan**—the redesigned Toyota Sienna all-wheel-drive with Honda Odyssey running second best and Mazda MPV third; **Fuel-Efficient Car**—the new Toyota Prius hybrid sedan with Honda Civic hybrid second and Toyota Echo (manual transmission) as third choice.

The others

In the other categories, there were no Top Picks, only highly rated or Recommended ones. Among these were: **Roadsters**—Honda S2000, Porsche Boxster 2.7 and Toyota MR2 Spyder; **Large Sedans**—Toyota Avalon XLS, Buick Park Avenue Ultra, Lincoln Town Car Signature; **Compact Pickup Trucks Crew Cab 4WD**—Ford Explorer Sport Trac, Dodge Dakota SLT Plus 4.7 (V8) and Toyota Tacoma were highly rated, but none got a Recommended check mark because of either below-average reliability or lack of reliability survey data; **Full-Sized Pickup Trucks V8 4WD**—Chevrolet Avalanche 1500 and Toyota Tundra SR5 4.7; **Large SUVs**—Toyota Land Cruiser, Toyota Sequoia Limited and Chevrolet Suburban 1500 LT; **Wagons and Hatchbacks**—VW Passat GLX 4Motion, Ford Focus Wagon SE, with Subaru Outback H6 VDC and Volvo XC70 getting the same score.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: My formula for success is rise early, work late and strike oil.—Paul Getty

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

TOYOTA Land Cruiser: scored highest and recommended in the large SUV category

SUBARU Forester: Top pick in the small SUV category

RP's Mobile Carwash bound for foreign soil

THE PIONEERING mobile carwash business of a group of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) is branching out to the Middle East through franchising.

This was revealed by president and chief executive officer Norman Gacula of OFW firm G&E Franchising & Marketing Corp., citing ongoing negotiations with Saudi businessmen for that purpose.

State franchise

"This deal involves a state franchise covering at least 300 Mobile Carwash units to be deployed in Saudi Arabia and can be subfranchised to smaller Saudi firms," Gacula said.

"The venture also involves a US$100,000 franchise fee and a total investment of US$1,000,000 excluding payments for royalties and supplies, all to be remitted to G&E in the Philippines," Gacula added.

Owned by more than 30 OFWs in different parts of the world, G&E conceptualizes, develops and manages franchise businesses. The other two are the info technology training center Global Digital Campus and IT books publication Global Digital Publishing.

Business expansion

Locally, the business is expanding and growing through franchising to cater to the lucrative portions of the huge market of 2.2 million vehicles nationwide.

The business offers three types of operation—one that stations several units in residential or commercial areas, another with units roving in specific localities and the so-called "on call service" wherein a client will just dial the phone number 928-WASH (9274) and the nearest stationed or roving unit will attend to him immediately.

There are also three types of carwash units—the motorcycle, multicab and pushcart models, which can be seen in website www.mobilecarwash.ph (Tel. No. 731-1303 or 9501).

The total investment per unit is P185,000 for multicab and motorcycle models, and P75,000 for the pushcart model.

The payback period is between 12 and 14 months or even less.

Investment coverage

The investment covers the mobile carwash unit, initial stock of supplies, service uniform, cellular phone, and preoperating and miscellaneous expenses.

Most importantly, the franchisee gets strong support in terms of sales and marketing, hiring and screening of personnel, extensive training and periodic updates, centralized phone-in system and purchasing, and quality control and audit.

The franchiser may also assign the franchisee to malls and commercial centers and big office buildings on a first-come, first-served basis, thereby reducing the problem of the franchisee in getting a reliable market.

For a simple wash, this professional and environment-friendly service takes only 30 minutes and for only P100 (small car), which guarantees a cleaner, shinier and drier car while giving the client convenience and a lot of precious time saved.

A tribute to Mazda

From page C4

with a built-in acceleration device, yet another world's first. During cornering, the track of the outside rear wheel normally falls outside the average of the tracks of the front wheels. The outside rear wheel does not rotate fast enough to keep up with the front wheels, preventing efficient transmission of torque. To counteract this problem, the SH-AWD acceleration device alters the gearing to speed up the outside rear wheel's rotation relative to the front wheels. This reduces torque transmission losses and significantly improves vehicle maneuverability.

So there. Remember, you read it first here (ahem!).

* * *

Where in the world can you find the only SUV with "the soul of a sports car"?

The Philippines, where else?

Just recently, Mazda Philippines launched two distinct models—the award-winning Mazda6, a sports sedan, and the all-new SUV Mazda Tribute 3.0L V6 Automatic.

I am more interested in the Mazda Tribute 3.0L V6.

Said Tonette Lee, Mazda's recent prized catch from Retirement Avenue: "This one's exactly for you, and I refer to the Mazda Tribute 3.0 V6. You see, SUVs have traditionally been more truck-like than car-like, but there is a growing demand for an SUV that combines the configuration of a truck, with the comfort and utility of a passenger car. Mazda's response is a totally new type of SUV—the Mazda Tribute."

I can believe Ms Tonette Lee for two reasons. One, I've known this fiery, if not gutsy, lady from way back. She talks sense all the time. Two, no matter how hard she tried to get herself out of the motoring industry, she wasn't quite successful. That's because she's born to be an automotive personality, a vital cog to an industry badly in need of someone with the inherent talent and skill to excel.

So if Tonette Lee says the Mazda Tribute is good, then it's good. Listen to her: "In developing the Tribute, Mazda sought to realize the key characteristics of Mazda product DNA, namely distinctive design, exceptional functionality and the main representation of its zoom-zoom attitude-responsive handling and performance."

I say, amen to that. And yes, welcome back again, Tonette. Nissan's loss was Mazda's gain.

* * *

ARCHIE & APRIL. I am guilty as charged for choosing a golf round over the more politically correct decision to attend the wedding of Archie Santayana and April Isla on Sunday, April 25. Gosh! What golf can do to a man, really. It was a terrible crime, especially because April is the eldest of three children of my esteemed friends, the dashing Toyota executive Danny and his ever-smiling wife Joy who celebrated their silver wedding anniversary the day their daughter tied the knot. I hope I can be forgiven. By coincidence, I also got married the day my parents had exchanged "I do's"—a Nov. 20. And Sol F. Juvida, my wife of 33 years, is an aunt of Archie Santayana. Small world. *Sana, forgiven na poe ako?*

* * *

QUOTE ME. The soon-to-be opened 78-km North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) directly links Bulacan, Tarlac and Pampanga to Metro Manila. Zambales and Bataan also connect them to Manila through NLEX, not to mention Ilocandia that include Nueva Ecija, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Cagayan and Pangasinan, my land of birth.

Because water is not always better

DID you know that the life-giving element called water, commonly used to "cool down" the inherent high temperatures in engines, can actually do more harm than good to your car's cooling system in the long run?

While water may be commonly used by most motorists, more often than not, it is not enough. Modern engines are designed to provide both high performance and optimum fuel economy. To achieve this, not only does the engine need to operate at peak level but it also has to carry the load of higher road speeds, emissions control devices, not to mention automatic transmissions, power steering and the now—standard air-conditioning systems.

Then there is also the engine's design, which now calls for the use of such metals as aluminum due to its lightweight, high-strength and low-cost fabrication qualities. And there are other factors such as smaller radiator grilles or openings—all in the name of more imaginative designs and streamlining. All these factors add up to higher operating temperatures—even higher than boiling point in most cases.

Did you also know that water, with its mix of hydrogen and oxygen, can easily corrode such elements as metals when in contact for prolonged periods? All these add up to one damaged engine.

More than just water

Engine coolants, on the other hand, may provide a better solution. More than just lowering the temperature, engine coolant circulating within the engine absorbs the heat generated by combustion.

Prestone, the leading name in automotive care products both here and abroad for over 70 years now, offers the optimal solution: Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate.

Developed to cope with the grueling operating environment of most modern engines, Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate is an ethylene glycol-based coolant, which protects against engine overheating.

When used as a mixture of 50 percent Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate and 50 percent water, it can reach up to 129°C before simmering.

More than just giving protection against overheating, Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate has other attributes that give it an edge over the competition. It binds a protective film around aluminum and other metal parts in your engine's cooling system, thus protecting against rust and corrosion—a major element which causes clogging of the cooling system which is one of the causes of engine overheating.

Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate has special inhibitors that help flush out rust and corrosion buildup within the cooling system. So even older engines, which have accumulated thousands of kilometers (not to mention rust particles), will be assured of running at the right temperature.

Cheaper than you think

Did you know that using plain water may turn out more expensive in the long run? Compared to some cheaper "alternatives" out there, you will only need around 3 liters of Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate, as compared to others which require about 12 500 ml bottles because some of them are already premixed with water.

It is concentrated so even with just a small amount—to meet the acceptable 50 percent Prestone-50 percent water—you will get the same or even better overheating protection as the others who ask for much more.

Make sure that your car's cooling system, radiator cap and all are working properly. Also fill up with Prestone Longlife Coolant Concentrate because sometimes, water alone is not necessarily better.

Autobytes

From page C4

just can't beat the look of a great exhaust system.

But you have to be careful about selecting your components and make sure they're compatible with the engine design.

Opting for too large pipes will actually diminish the results!

ISUZU CHALLENGE
E-DRIVE

ISUZU CHALLENGE 2004 SERIOUS RULES, SERIOUS RESULTS, SERIOUS FUN.

This year's Isuzu Challenge made it clear to everybody that when it comes to fuel efficiency, nobody can challenge the skill and enthusiasm of Isuzu owners in their beloved Isuzu vehicles. And they're serious about e-drive and maxxing out the efficiency of the remarkable Isuzu Direct Injection Diesel engine. Indeed, the recently held Isuzu Challenge E-Drive Competition once again proved why the Isuzu engines are one of, if not the most, fuel efficient.

SERIOUS RULES
The Rules have changed.

The participating teams were subjected to technical "scrutineering" covering everything from exact tire pressure to air-con thermostat levels. A marshal was assigned to ride with each participating vehicle to monitor each of the teams' drive from start to the end of a 284.2 km route and prevent them from turning off their engines and air-conditioning units. The rules have strictly made everyone drive as "close to normal driving conditions" as possible.

On the early morning of March 27, a convoy of 40 vehicles which included the participating Isuzu owners, the Isuzu service vans, an ambulance, and marshals, left from the Isuzu showroom in Sto.Tomas Batangas and proceeded towards Dagupan after fueling up with Total Low Sulfur diesel, the ideal fuel for Isuzu Direct Injection Engines. This has been to date, the longest Isuzu Challenge E-drive fuel efficiency route that even runs conducted by government agencies haven't reached. This year the brand slogan of Isuzu "How Far can you go?" literally raised the bar of competition for the participating teams.

The participants went from National roads to Super highways to provincial back roads, as well as a mix of heavy traffic congestion and open stretches. The drive experience faithfully covered "normal" driving conditions.

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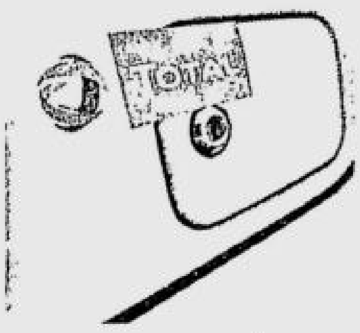


SERIOUS RESULTS - Unbelievably real.

Despite this year's stringent rules and challenging route, the results were undeniably overwhelming. In the Isuzu Crosswind category, Ronald and Roy Aguto logged the fantastic best fuel efficiency of 22.43 km per liter while Michael and Patrick Gutierrez also did amazingly well in the Isuzu Fuego category, finishing with 23.12 km per liter. David and Zata Aquino bested everyone in the Isuzu Trooper category with an efficiency of 16.94 km per liter. Isuzu's newest model, a DMAX driven by Badez Timbang and Joel Zobel, didn't let down Isuzu's greatest quality finishing with a 16.53 km per liter consumption. The Isuzu Challenge E-drive event was fortunate to have Mr. Danny Javier and Mr. Max Marquez from the Department of Energy (DOE), Mr. Manny Camagay from the National Center for Transportation Studies as well as Jerry Javier (CPA) an independent auditor as observers and verifying committee. The guidelines were strict but followed by all the participants and enforced by the events team.

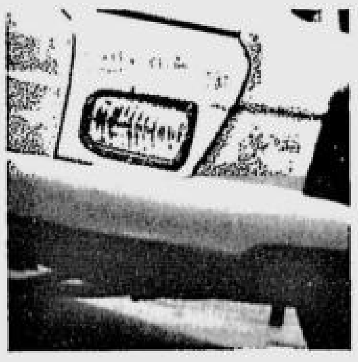
CROSSWIND	22.43 km/li
FUEGO	23.12 km/li
TROOPER	16.94 km/li
DMAX	16.53 km/li

SERIOUS FUN – An evening of celebration, camaraderie and revelry

Right after the long route, participants were treated to a hefty buffet lunch and then had the chance to rest at the Pangasinan Regency Hotel knowing that when the night came, everyone should be ready for an immense party. Dinner came and everyone was excited with the Awarding ceremonies. Participants forgot about the stiff competition and bonded no more as foes and strangers but as old friends with shared passions. Everyone enjoyed the music of the live band and danced 'til the wee hours of the morning. In the end, everyone had a grand time and didn't even realize that the morning sun was about to rise.

The tradition of the Isuzu Challenge continues in November for the family activities, but many are raring to go for the next E-drive. Hints were given that the 2005 E-drive may be 1000 km long. The response from the owners was a resounding "let's do it!"

With this kind of passion and camaraderie it is no wonder that Isuzu owners have a unique relationship with their vehicles and with Isuzu Philippines Corporation. When asked "How far can you go?" their answer may always be "With my Isuzu, I'll take on any Challenge".



HOW FAR CAN YOU GO?

---

1. Department of Energy (DOE)
   - a.) Danny Javier - Planning Department
   - b) Max Marquez - Efficiency Department
2. National Center for Transportation Studies
   - a) Manny Camagay - Research Associate, Transport and Environmental Lab
3. Jerry Javier - CPA, Independent Auditor

A tribute to Mazda

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

HERE is good news from Honda Motor Co. Ltd. The giant Japanese car manufacturer has announced the development of a new Super Handling All-Wheel-Drive system, called SH-AWD.

According to Honda Philippines' Arnel Doria, the new technology provides "cornering performance that responds faithfully to driver input and outstanding vehicle stability."

This is the first of its kind in the automotive industry.

The invention describes the SH-AWD system "as combining front-rear torque distribution control with independently regulated torque distribution to the left and right rear wheels to freely distribute the optimum amount of torque to all four wheels in accordance with driving conditions."

That is the good news.

The bad news is, the new system will only be available in Japan and America this fall—through the Acura RL (North America) and the Legend (Japan).

* * *

But to digress further on the new technology, the SH-AWD system determines the optimum front-rear and lateral (left-right) torque distribution. To quote from Arnel Doria further: "This information is then conveyed to the rear differential, where direct electromagnetic clutches continuously regulate and vary front-rear torque distribution between ratios of 30:70 and 70:30, and lateral torque distribution in the rear wheels between ratios of 100:0 and 0:100. Torque is used not only for propulsion, but for cornering as well, resulting in a significant enhancement in vehicle maneuverability."

The SH-AWD system is composed of sensors to detect steering angle, lateral g and other vehicle information; an ECU; and the rear differential. The direct electromagnetic clutches inside the rear differential, another world's first, employ electromagnets to obtain precise control over the multi-plate clutches. Built-in search coils monitor the gaps between the electromagnets and the magnetic body to achieve precise, continuously variable torque regulation.

The rear differential is also equipped

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—Mark Lim of Pampanga

Exhaust tuning, when properly done, should improve the efficiency of your engine and thus save you fuel. A good exhaust is the foundation of other engine performance enhancers because engines make power by pumping air, and if the exhaust restricts that air it's also restricting power.

But the average car buyer really doesn't mind losing some power in exchange for a quiet exhaust. This is why new cars are sold with exhaust systems that sacrifice some performance for low noise output. Low noise output is essentially achieved by strangling the engine's breathing, and this is done not only with mufflers, but also with some twisting, narrow stock pipes. Fortunately, stock exhaust systems are easily removed and replaced with higher performing versions; the higher performance is achieved by using high-flow mufflers and straight, larger diameter piping with smooth bends.

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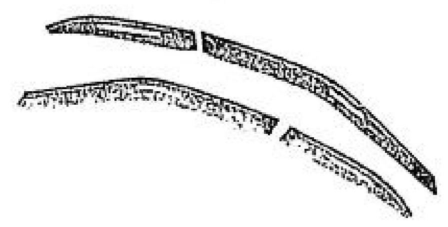

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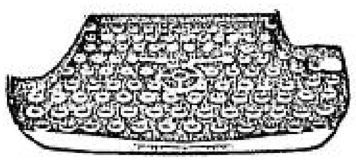

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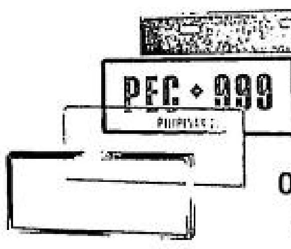

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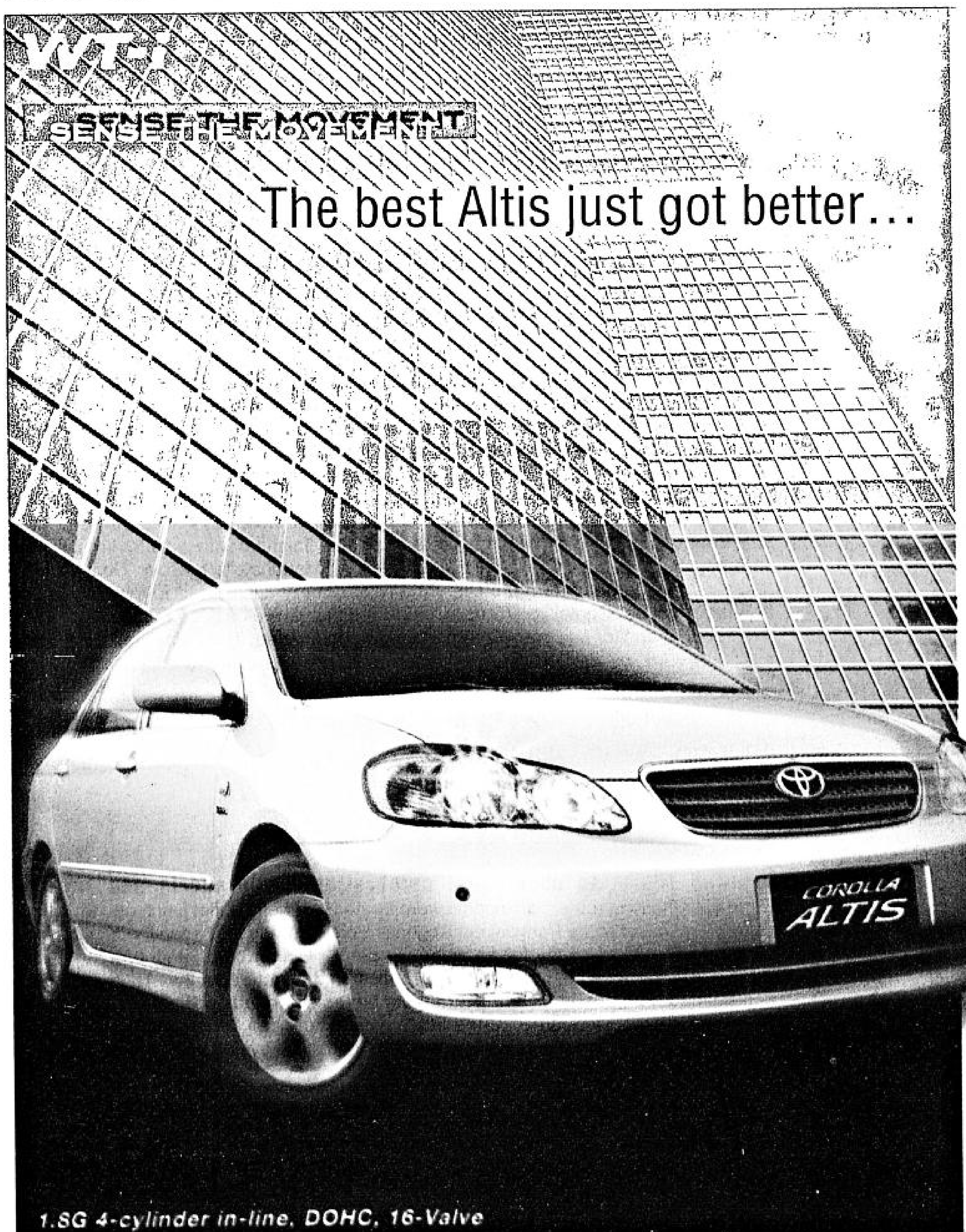
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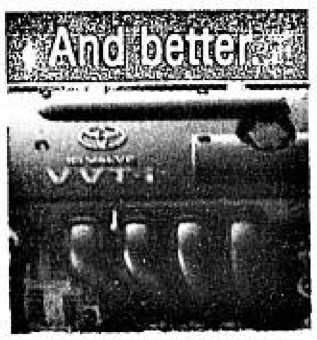

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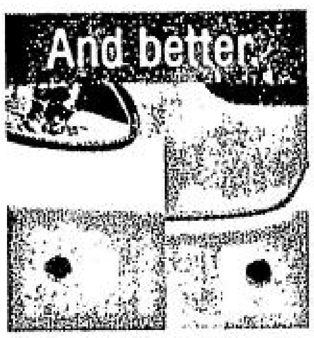

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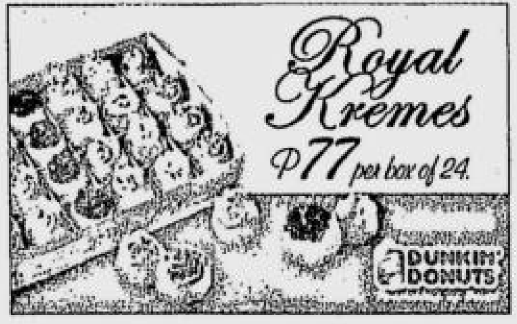

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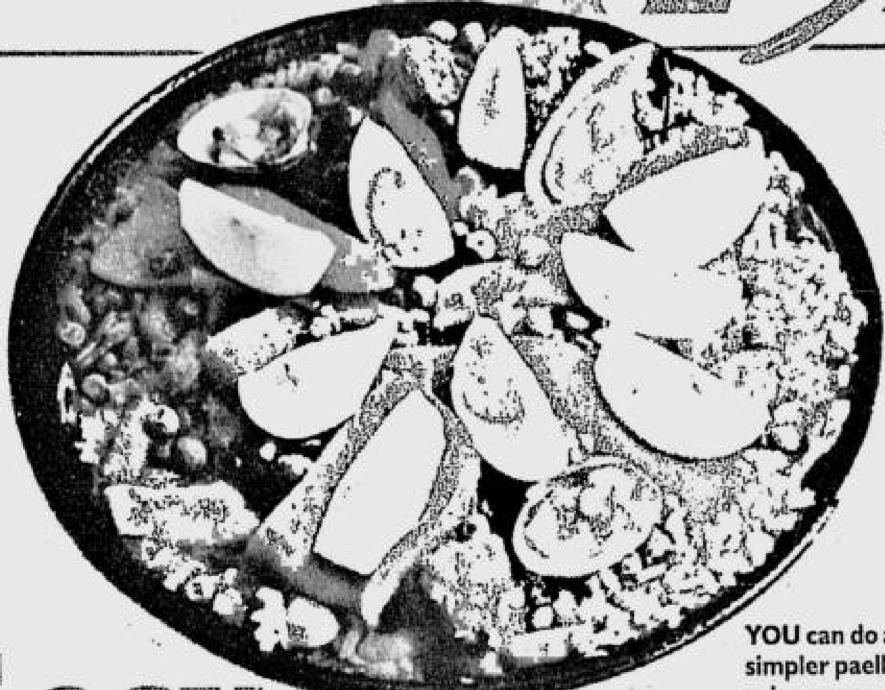

YOU can do a simpler paella using your trusty rice cooker.

Easy recipes for Labor Day weekend

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

LABOR Day, when workers get to be recognized and honored, is certainly also a good time for homemakers to take it easy and opt for recipes that are no hassle to prepare for family and friends.

Here we have rice cooker paella, gourmet *adobo* made special with balsamic vinegar and rosemary leaves, and green tea cheesecake. Happy bonding!

EASY/ D2

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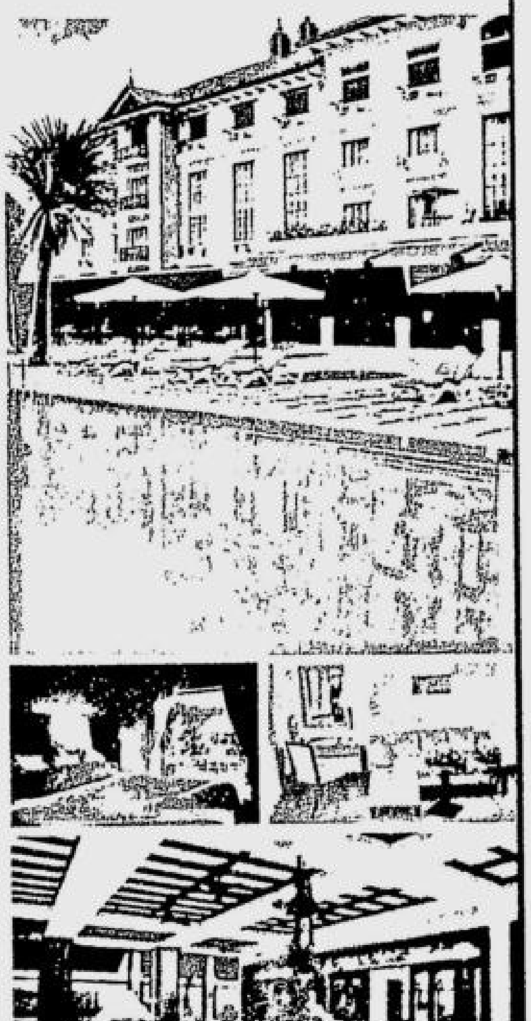

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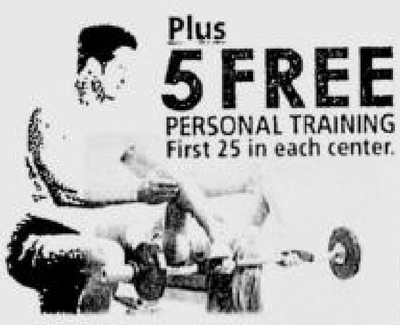

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May cooking classes

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts has released the following schedule of classes:

May 1 (Saturday)—Cook-out burgers and steaks (all-new): Grilled Angus Steaks and Burgers with Sauces, Mayonnaise Blends, Home-made Catsups, Glazes, Relishes, Salsas and Condiments. Burgers: The Best Angus Beef Burger Ever, Barbecued Pork, Seafood, I-can't-believe-it's-tofu, Mushroom, Turkey and Lamb. Homemade Burger Buns. Plus salads, dessert and iced tea concoctions. Free imported beer tasting

May 3 (Monday)—Sausage-making 101 (all-new): Learn to make sausages the easy way—beef, pork, mix meat, lamb, chicken, duck, seafood, etc.; Cooking and serving techniques; Sauces and side dishes

May 5 (Wednesday)—Reggie's Twisted Asian Merienda: Dim sum Tray of Pandan and Ube Siopao with Asado Filling, Duck and Lechon Spring Rolls, Gourmet-style Siomai (Sticky Rice and Scallops); Fried Chinese Noodles with Calamares and Crispy Fried Shrimp, Asian Pasta Arrabiata with Tempura of Soft-shell Crab, Mee Krob (Thai crispy noodles), Ice Kachang with Homemade Green Tea Ice Cream, Sake Sangria.

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Easy recipes for Labor Day weekend

From page D1

Rice Cooker Paella

½ c olive oil or corn oil
¼ c well-pounded garlic
1 c sliced onions
1 tbsp *kasubha* (native saffron)
1 tsp paprika
2 chicken breasts, cut up
½ kg pork cubes (*kasim* or *lomo*)
2 pcs *chorizo* Bilbao
500 g raw *malagkit* rice, washed
1 c raw long-grain rice, washed
400-g can tomato sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
1 c sliced red and green bell pepper
¼ kg white shrimps or prawns
1 c string beans, cut into 1½-inch lengths
6 c water

Garnishing:
1 pc fresh lemon, sliced into circles.
Hard-boiled eggs, sliced
2 pcs red bell pepper, roasted and cut into strips
Parsley

Heat up olive or corn oil in a large wok. Add garlic, onions, *kasubha* and paprika. Sauté until the onions are wilted. Add the chicken, pork and sliced *chorizo*. Continue to sauté until the chicken and pork change color.

Pour in the *malagkit* and long-grain rice. Mix well. Add tomato sauce and season with salt and pepper. Add sliced bell pepper, shrimps, string beans and water. Allow to boil vigorously for five minutes.

Transfer the mixture to a rice cooker. Activate the rice cooker to allow the paella to continue to cook.

Transfer the cooked paella to a serving platter. Garnish with lemon, sliced hard-boiled eggs, roasted pepper strips and parsley.

Gourmet Adobo

1 whole chicken, cut into serving pieces
¼ c *sukang paombong*
¼ c balsamic or raspberry vinegar
¼ c cherry brandy
½ tsp peppermill-ground black pepper
1 tsp dried rosemary leaves or 1 tbsp fresh rosemary
¼ c well-pounded garlic
½ c water
400-g can whole button mushrooms, well drained
¼ c soy sauce
½ c sliced onions

In a glass, stainless or enamel saucepan, combine the first seven ingredients. Mix well and let stand for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, add ½ cup water and button mushrooms. Place over medium heat and allow to boil. As soon as it boils, allow the mixture to simmer for about 20 minutes or until the chicken is done. Pour in soy sauce. Add the sliced onions. Allow to boil for a few minutes more to allow the onions to cook a bit.

Note: Balsamic, raspberry vinegar, fresh or dried rosemary leaves are available in large supermarkets and delicatessens.

Green Tea Cheesecake

Crust:
6 tbsp butter
¾ c crushed chocolate Graham crackers

Cheesecake:
1½ tsp green tea powder
¾ c water
2 tbsp unflavored gelatin
2 bars cream cheese
2 c all-purpose cream
½ c white sugar
Green food color (optional)

Topping:
½ c all-purpose cream, well chilled
2 tbsp sifted powdered sugar
Bittersweet chocolate curls or shavings

Melt butter in a heavy saucepan. Add crushed biscuits and blend well. Divide the mixture equally among two glass or disposable pie plates. Using the back of a teaspoon, press the crust against the bottom of the plate forming a solid crust. Set aside.

In a small saucepan disperse the green tea powder in ¾ cup water. Mix well and place over low heat until the powder blends with the water. Measure ½ cup of the mixture and transfer to another saucepan. Add the gelatin powder and mix well. Allow the gelatin granules to swell and then cook over low heat until the gelatin dissolves completely taking care that the mixture does not boil. Set aside.

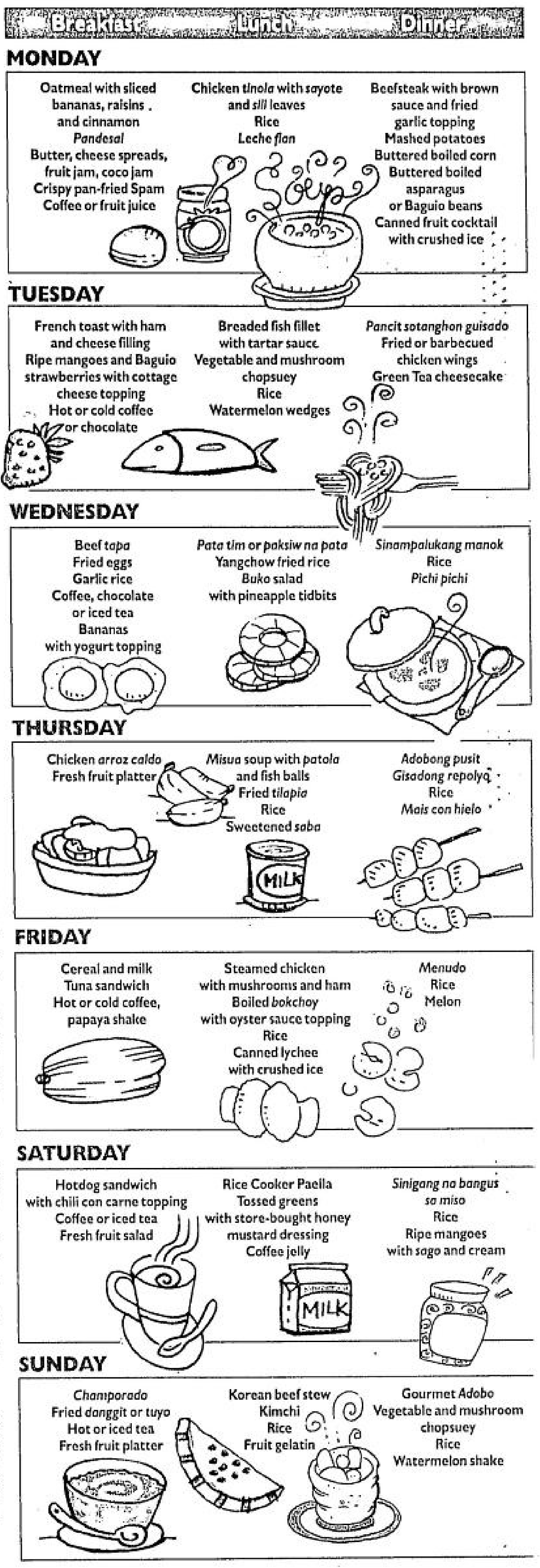
Beat the cream cheese using an electric mixer until fluffy. Pour in the all-purpose cream and the sugar. Beat until smooth. Pour in the gelatin solution and continue to beat until blended. Enhance with green food color if desired.

Divide the mixture equally among the prepared molders. Freeze or chill until firm. When ready to serve unmold the cheesecakes to a platter and top with whipped cream and chocolate shavings.

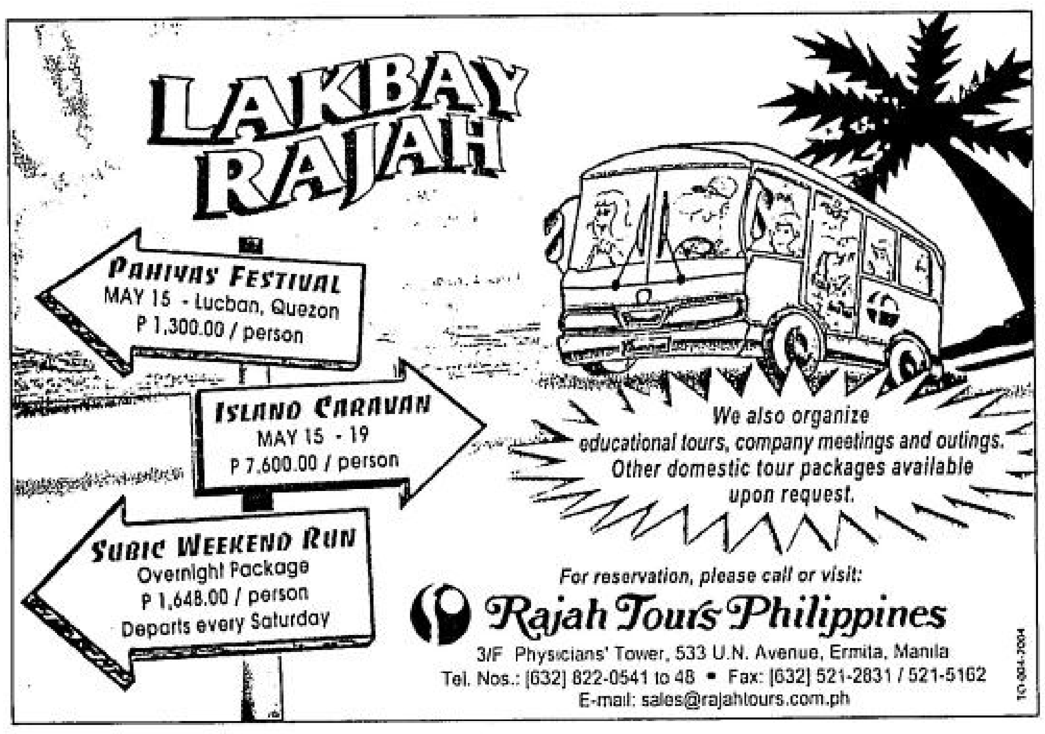
Beat the all-purpose cream together with the sugar until it somewhat doubles in volume. Transfer the mixture to a pastry bag fitted with an open-star tip.

Note: Green tea powder is available in large supermarkets and health food stores. Green tea bags may also be used as a substitute.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating classes at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City, Julius Maggi Kitchen in Makati and in key provincial cities. For classes in Manila, call 7217735 or e-mail dorothyferreria@skyinet.net For classes in Bacolod this week contact (034) 4340445.



	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Oatmeal with sliced bananas, raisins and cinnamon *Pandesal* Butter, cheese spreads, fruit jam, coco jam Crispy pan-fried Spam Coffee or fruit juice	Chicken *tinola* with *sayote* and *sili* leaves Rice Leche *flan*	Beefsteak with brown sauce and fried garlic topping Mashed potatoes Buttered boiled corn Buttered boiled asparagus or Baguio beans Canned fruit cocktail with crushed ice
TUESDAY	French toast with ham and cheese filling Ripe mangoes and Baguio strawberries with cottage cheese topping Hot or cold coffee or chocolate	Breaded fish fillet with tartar sauce Vegetable and mushroom chopsuey Rice Watermelon wedges	*Pancit sotanghon guisado* Fried or barbecued chicken wings Green Tea cheesecake
WEDNESDAY	Beef *tapa* Fried eggs Garlic rice Coffee, chocolate or iced tea Bananas with yogurt topping	*Pata tim or paksiw na pata* Yangchow fried rice *Buko* salad with pineapple tidbits	*Sinampalukang manok* Rice *Pichi pichi*
THURSDAY	Chicken *arroz caldo* Fresh fruit platter	*Misua* soup with *patola* and fish balls Fried *tilapia* Rice Sweetened *saba*	*Adobong pusit* *Gisadong repolyo* Rice *Mais con hielo*
FRIDAY	Cereal and milk Tuna sandwich Hot or cold coffee, papaya shake	Steamed chicken with mushrooms and ham Boiled *bokchoy* with oyster sauce topping Rice Canned lychee with crushed ice	*Menudo* Rice Melon
SATURDAY	Hotdog sandwich with chili con carne topping Coffee or iced tea Fresh fruit salad	Rice Cooker Paella Tossed greens with store-bought honey mustard dressing Coffee jelly	*Sinigang na bangus sa miso* Rice Ripe mangoes with *sago* and cream
SUNDAY	*Champorado* Fried *danggit* or *tuyo* Hot or iced tea Fresh fruit platter	Korean beef stew Kimchi Rice Fruit gelatin	Gourmet *Adobo* Vegetable and mushroom chopsuey Rice Watermelon shake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Coffee and tea trade show

THE SECOND Coffee, Tea and Specialty Beverage Trade Show will be held July 2-4 at Megatrade Hall 2, 5/L, SM Megamall B, Mandaluyong City.

Among the many highlights of the event, organized by Primetrade Asia Inc. and supported by the Specialty Coffee Association of the Philippines (SCAP), is the second Philippine Barista Cup.

Participating in the show are Aji-No-ChinMiCo (UCC Coffee), Allegro Beverage Corp., Cheesecake Etc., Coffee Perfection, Concept Specialist Inc., Continental Associated Food Products Export Inc. (Cafex), Digital Dimension, Equilibrium Intertrade Corp. (Torani), George Steuarts Phils. Inc., Gloria Jean's Coffee, Gourmet Farms, HCC-Hawaiian Coffee Co., Hacienda Macalauan, Ideal Macaroni/Da Vinci Gourmet, KLG International Inc., Lush Enterprises Corp., Mocha Blends, Philippine Food Service Equipment and Supplies Corp. (PFESCORP), Sterling Paper, Sugar and Beans Coffee Co., Technolux Equipment and Supply Corp., The Coffee Beanery and The Coffee Experience.

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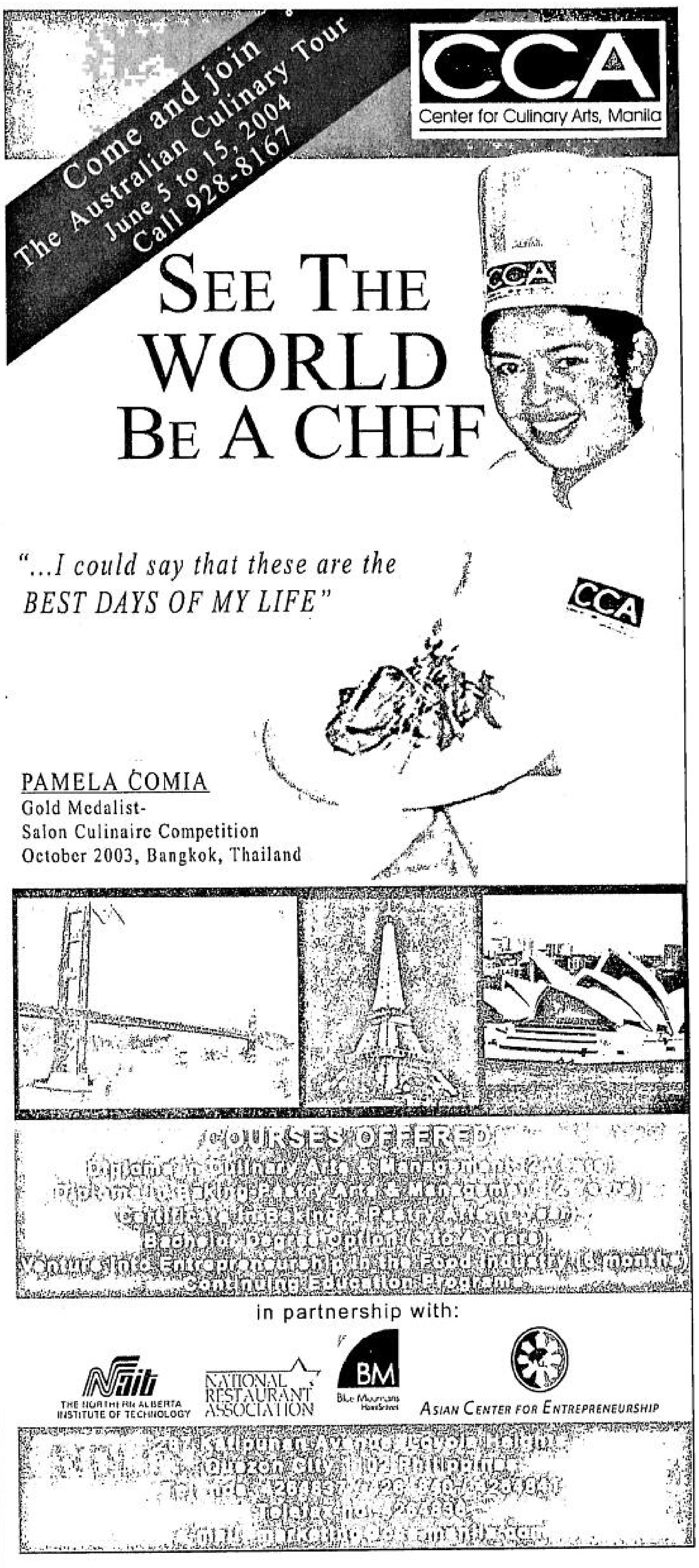
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Ads exaggerate their products' health benefits

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

WE have been wondering why the Bureau of Food and Drugs and, for that matter, the National Advertising Board, continue to ignore ads that exploit scientific findings by hinting that the products they promote are healthful.

Artificial fruit juice with Vitamin C is a prime example. The truth, according to a nutrition expert, is that Vitamin C in packaged fruit juice may have disappeared by the time the consumer drinks the product.

Dietary supplements are something else. Ads claim they are natural, hence, safe. But many of these dietary supplements have been found to be dangerous. The Consumers Report, an international consumers' publication, has just released the results of a research that identified the first dirty dozen. We will feature the list later.

Right now, we are concerned about a soy sauce ad that exploits healthful isoflavones in soya as a marketing ploy. Isoflavones, nutrition experts at the University of the Philippines explained, are biologically active phytochemicals (substances derived from plants) which, when regularly present in the diet, may help prevent cancer.

The soy sauce ads claim that the product has isoflavones which "may help reduce the risk of cancer." No less than Sen. Juan Flavier prominently endorses the product in ads with the catchphrase "Kain Kontra Kanser!"

A group of nutrition experts at the UP sets the record straight in their research, "Isoflavones and Soy Sauce." The researchers say, "while it has been... established... that soy isoflavones can help prevent cancer, soy foods with insignificant levels of isoflavone content cannot do such a task. Soy sauce is one of these."

The experts estimated how much soy sauce a Filipino should consume every day to meet the average daily requirement to get the anti-cancer benefit. Their conclusion was about 2.17 kilograms or about half a gallon of soy sauce a day! Figure out what it will do to the vital organs since soy sauce has other components.

Fortunately, the particular ad is no longer seen around. For more information about the UP research, e-mail apex@vasia.com.

DTI responds

This is the feedback from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on the question of S. Francisco about a text message he received from a supposed charity foundation announcing he won P920,000 in an electronic draw:

"The text is a fraud/hoax, as DTI has been warning the public since last year. Moreover, the National Bureau of Investigation is tracking down these reported unscrupulous phone callers and texters," says Jaime Lazaro Olmos, DTI assistant director and caretaker of the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection.

He explained that under Article 121 of the Consumer Act of the Philippines, the winners of any sales promotion are chosen at a specific date and place in the presence of representatives from the concerned government department and sponsor of the promo. The list of winners, their addresses and corresponding prizes are immediately submitted to the department, then publicly announced or published. The winners are duly notified through registered mail or other means of communication that can be verified.

By the way, assistant director Olmos said DTI forwarded to the concerned agencies the following complaints mentioned in a previous column: disconnection of cable-TV service without prior notice and the misleading promo of a cable-TV company. He also pointed out that Article 100 (not 110 as we had mentioned), Chapter V of the Consumer Act, R.A. 7394, protected consumers from lemon buys and bad service.

Antibiotic resistance

Parents and physicians with personal knowledge about children who developed resistance to certain antibiotics may want to share their story with journalist Henrylito Tacio (tacio@mozcom.com or tasyo2002@yahoo.com). He is currently gathering data for an in-depth report on infections by antibiotic-resistant microorganisms among children. The story will help inform the public about the dangers of antibiotic misuse and abuse.

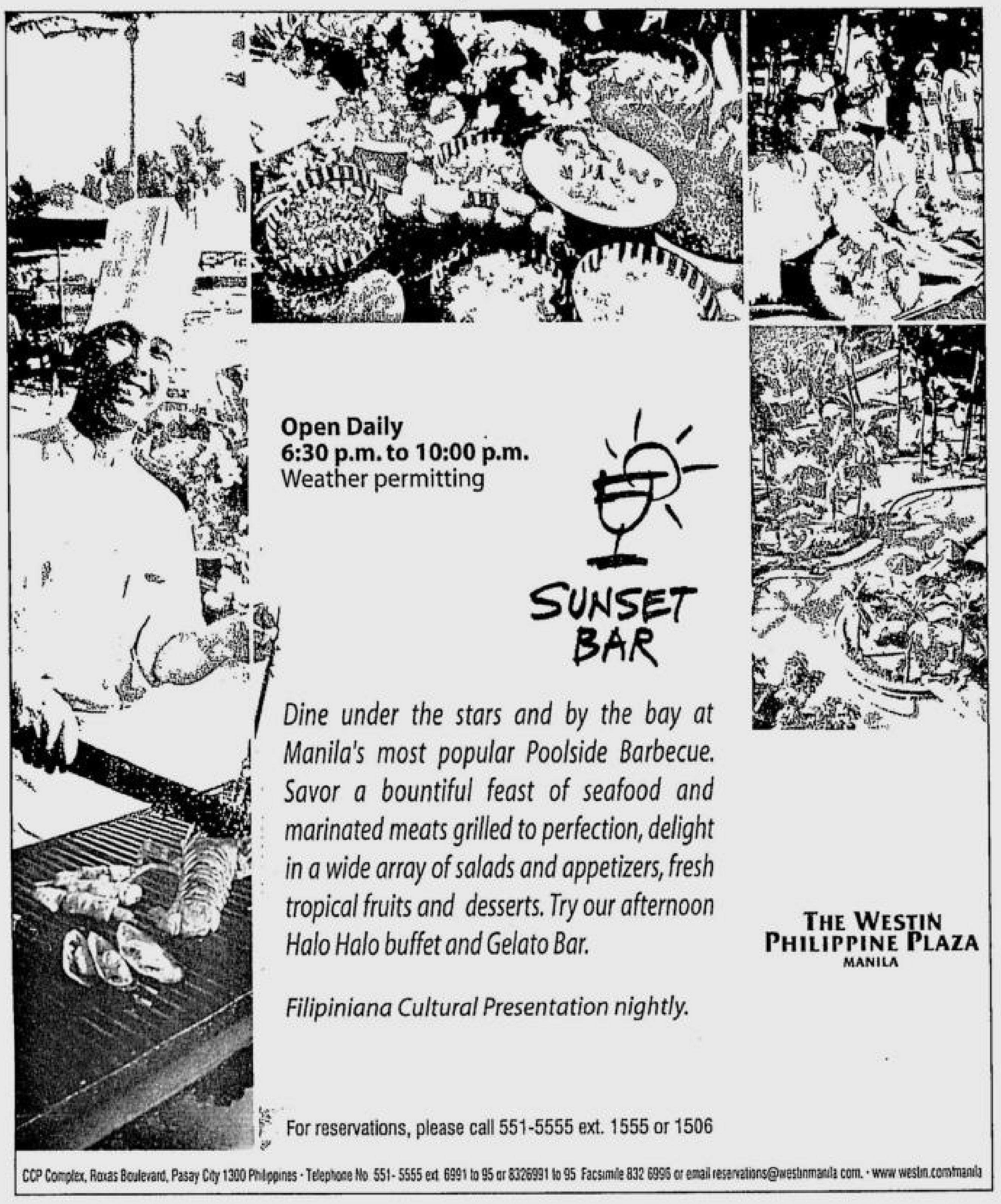
Satisfied customer

Reader I. Kwin wishes to thank Equitable Card employees for helping him when his three credit cards were stolen and subsequently used by the thief to shop at a department store in Quezon City.

He complained that the other two banks refused to disregard the disputed transaction because he reported the loss of the credit cards several hours after they were stolen. But they advised him to send formal letters informing the card companies about the fraudulent transactions and disputing the charges. One of the banks also froze interest charges on the account in question, which is now 1 ½ months old.

"What is the use of the signature on credit cards—supposedly a security for the credit card owner—if its veracity is not verified by cashiers? Please let this be an 'eye-opener' to your readers," the cardholder said.

Send consumer complaints and comments to giron@mailstation.net



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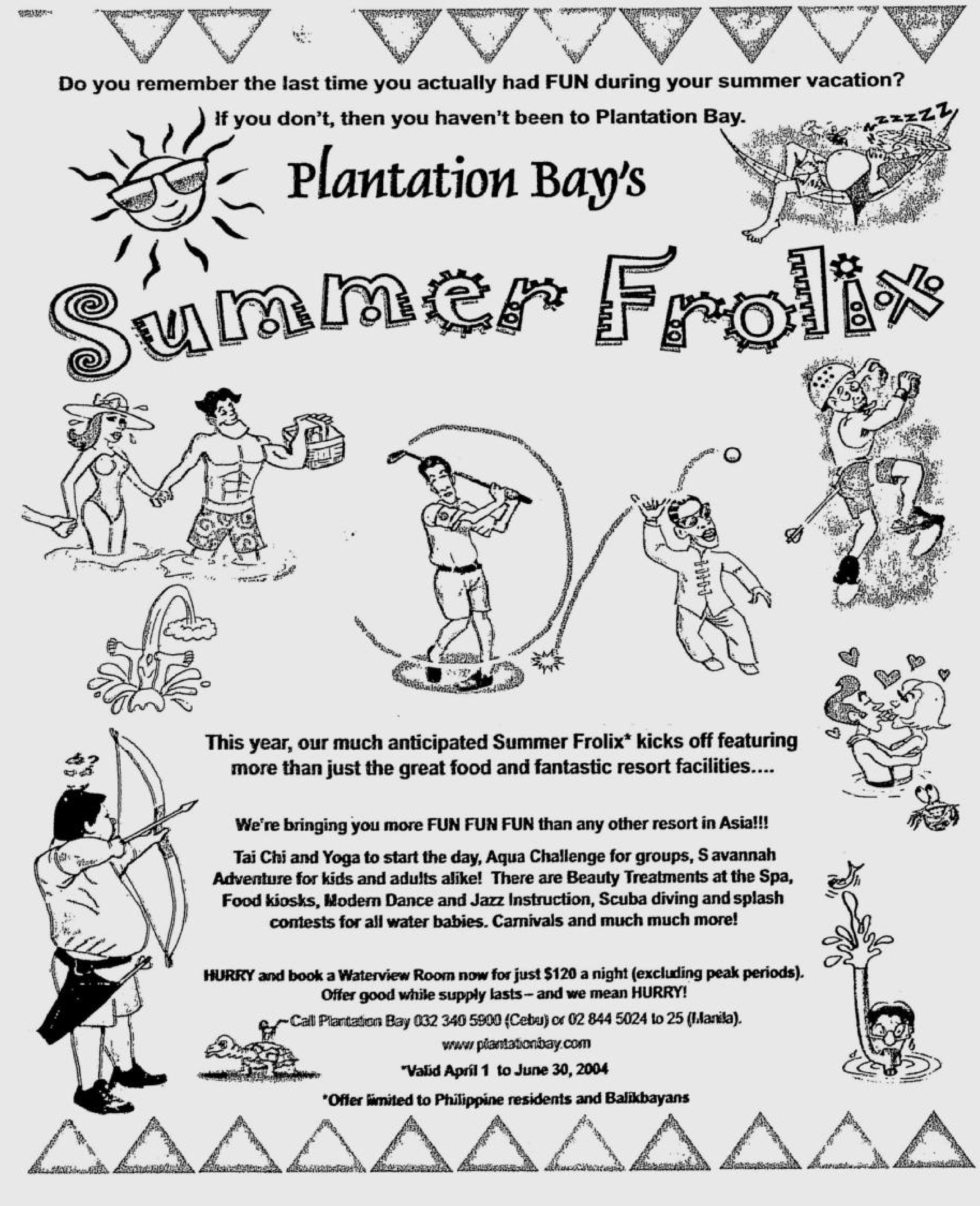

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*Offer limited to Philippine residents and Balikbayans

CHILDREN can spend the last days of summer learning how to cook.

Children's cooking classes begin May 10

VICKY Veloso-Barrera's Tiny Kitchen will conduct more children's cooking classes beginning May 10.

The classes for kids aged 7 and up will feature a full menu allowing each student to do four dishes.

Classes will be held 9-11 a.m. once a week (Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday) for five consecutive weeks until June 7. On Saturdays, afternoon classes will also be held 2-4 p.m.

Cost of each five-session course is P4,500, inclusive of ingredients. Only seven children will be accepted per class to be conducted at Barrera's home in Quezon City. Call 4102279 or 0916-5165035. Enrolment forms are also available at the Malu Veloso bridal boutique, 3/F Shangri-La Edsa Mall, with tel. 6315054.